

CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



Land Protected in Glenburn Township

In March, following many years of consideration and discussion, the Countryside Conservancy concluded a conservation easement with Barbara Monick to cover seven acres of her land in Glenburn Township, Lackawanna County. The protected land lies in the Ackerly Creek sub-watershed of the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed, in the same general area where Countryside Conservancy closed many of its earliest projects.

The easement is bounded by Waverly Road and the former Northern Electric Railway right-of-way. It will preserve a highly visible piece of undeveloped green space in the middle of Glenburn Township, an area subject to increasing suburbanization.

The land protected by the easement consists mainly of old fields which are succeeding to shrubland. Dominant plants in the shrubland areas include gray dogwood and arrowwood, and young red maples, walnuts, black cherry and white spruce are also growing up in places. Trees planted on this property by the Conservancy in cooperation with the landowner in the late 1990s include redbuds, sycamores, red maples, and hawthorns. Two small wetlands in low-lying areas of the property harbor typical wetland plants such as sedges, rushes and sensitive fern. A woodland area fringing the easement includes sugar maples, black cherries, walnuts and other species.



This open space will be protected forever by the conservation easement.

The entire easement is designated as “Highest Protection Area” under the classification developed by the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association. This means that the area within the easement will never be subject to development of any sort – a very serious commitment by the landowner. The overriding conservation purpose of this easement is to protect the native habitats occurring on site and to allow them to succeed naturally. The easement will provide a green and open view for passersby, as well as habitat for native plants and animals, forever.

The Monick easement was drafted to tightly protect the natural values of this property. Conservation easements can also be tailored to accommodate active use of a property such as farming and forestry, or even limited construction such as home sites. Conservation easements are drafted to protect the specific conservation values of a property and meet the needs and wishes of the landowner. Once an easement is finalized, however, it is permanent and binding upon the current landowner and all future landowners. This is why careful consideration is required throughout the drafting process.

The Conservancy sincerely thanks Mrs. Monick and her late husband, Dr. Eugene Monick, for their dedication to protecting this land. We are honored to help protect this beautiful piece of our landscape. If you would like information about protecting your own land, please contact Rylan or Mary at the Conservancy office, (570) 945-6995 or cconserv@epix.net.

SAVE THE DATE: Tailgate Picnic Sunday, September 20, at Meadowsweet Preserve

Join us for our traditional end-of-summer celebration! Live music, wagon rides, nature activities, kids' games and more. Hike or bike Meadowsweet trails to Lackawanna State Park. The Picnic is free to Conservancy members; non-members can receive a discount membership with their Picnic admission. See page 3 for details.



Countryside Conservancy

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Upcoming Events

- Saturday, August 15: **Birds & Butterflies Walk at Little Rocky Glen.** Join naturalist Rebecca Lesko of the Endless Mountains Nature Center to look and listen for birds, butterflies, and other wild critters. Enjoy a walk in the cool Hemlock ravine and flower-filled meadows, then have lunch in the picnic pavilion. Bring a bag lunch, water bottle, binoculars if you have them, and wear sturdy shoes. Fee: \$2 for EMNC Stewards and Countryside Conservancy members; \$4 others. Call EMNC at 836-3835 or visit www.emnconline.org for more information.
- Sunday, August 23: **Trail Work Day** led by trail volunteer Joe Tierney. Repair wet areas on the Turkey Hill part of the Lackawanna State Park trail network. Joe is always looking for additional volunteers to help with trail maintenance. Contact Joe at 335-3090 if you'd like to take part.
- Saturday, August 29: **Stewardship day at the Miller preserve**, La Plume Township. This property at La Plume Corners on Routes 6 & 11 is a recent Conservancy acquisition that will someday form part of the Trolley Trail. Join us to cut back brush along the old trolley right-of-way, post boundaries, and pick up litter. Call Rylan Coker at 945-6995 if you'd like to take part.
- Wednesday, September 2: **Evening kayak paddle at Lackawanna State Park**, led by park Environmental Educator Angela Lambert. Come explore the lake with someone who knows it best! Meet at 7:15 pm at the boat launch near the fishing pier. A limited number of kayaks are available through the Park for a \$5 fee; life jackets and paddles are provided. Call Angela at 945-7110 if you'd like to reserve a kayak, or for more information. (Backup weather date: Thursday, September 3.)
- Saturday, September 19: **Stewardship day at Meadowsweet preserve**, Lily Lake Road. Any needed trail work, cleanup and setup for our Tailgate Picnic on the following day. Call Rylan Coker at 945-6995 if you can help out.
- Sunday, September 20: **Fifteenth Annual Tailgate Picnic** at Meadowsweet Preserve, Lily Lake Road, 3 pm till dusk. Free to Conservancy members. (See full information on page 3.)
- Sunday, October 11: **Northeastern Philharmonic Crescendo Family Concert** at the Scranton Cultural Center. At 1:00 pm, the Conservancy, the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition and others will lead kids and families through a tour of the United States, and at 2:00 the Philharmonic will lead a live musical journey across the country. Tickets are just \$7, or \$25 for a family four-pack. Call 341-1568 for details.
- Saturday-Sunday, October 10 and 11: The Conservancy will be at **Elk Mountain's Fall Festival!** Come out, ride the chairlift to the highest point in the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed and enjoy the beautiful fall foliage. The Festival features arts and crafts vendors, food and drink, hay rides, live music and more.

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.

Tailgate Picnic Coming on September 20



Countryside Conservancy invites you to join us in celebrating summer's end in the great outdoors. The Conservancy will hold its 15th Annual Tailgate Picnic on Sunday, September 20 at its Meadowsweet Preserve on Lily Lake Road, Abington Township. The Picnic starts at 3 pm and continues till dusk. Pack a picnic lunch and join us for this great neighborhood tradition!

Ellie Hyde, this year's Picnic chair, is lining up live music from High Falls, the Acker family's open-air corn roast and smores fest, and more. Margaret Hull of Spring Hills Farm and her team of Belgians, Ben and Jake, will offer free wagon rides. Children's activities will include kite flying, sack races and nature activities. Guides will also be on hand to lead visitors over Conservancy-protected lands on a nature walk to the Lackawanna State Park (about a mile and a half round-trip).

Picnic admission is free to Conservancy members. Non-members can join at a special \$15 rate which includes picnic admission. Meadowsweet Preserve is located on Lily Lake Road in Abington Township. Take PA Route 407 north for three-quarters of a mile from the Waverly Community House, turn left onto Lily Lake Road, and the picnic site is less than half a mile down the road on the right.

Bill Booth of the Conservancy's Board of Directors will lead a mountain bike ride over trails of Countryside Conservancy and Lackawanna State Park in the morning before the Tailgate Picnic. A small fee will get you into both the bike ride and the Picnic. Please call the office at 945-6995 for more information.



Meadowsweet Preserve

We will highlight a different Conservancy preserve in coming issues of *CountryViews*. In this issue, we introduce the property where our Tailgate Picnic takes place: **Meadowsweet Preserve**.

Meadowsweet is one of our oldest preserves, purchased by the Conservancy in 2001 with the help of an anonymous donor and a grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. This property was acquired as part of a drive to protect acreage near Lackawanna State Park from further development, and to create an off-road trail from Lily Lake Road to the State Park.

The preserve was named by Roz Peck for a native wild shrub, Meadow-sweet (*Spirea alba* or *Spirea latifolia*), common in wet meadows such as those found at this site. The large expanse of open fields is the preserve's most notable feature when seen from Lily Lake Road, but the rest of the property further back from the road is dominated by woodlands.

This 60-acre preserve lies in Abington Township, Lackawanna County and is accessed from Lily Lake Road just off Route 407 (North Abington Road). You'll see a gravel parking lot with a green metal trailhead sign on your right about half a mile down Lily Lake Road from Route 407. Trails built by Joe Tierney and other volunteers start here and run uphill for over half a mile across Meadowsweet, neighboring lands, and the Conservancy's Quarry Ridge Preserve before entering Lackawanna State Park. Hikers, joggers, dog-walkers and mountain bikers are among the wildlife you may encounter here.

We warmly thank the donors, neighbors and volunteers who have helped us acquire, care for and improve the Meadowsweet Preserve for almost ten years now!

Nominations Sought for 2010 Stewardship Awards

The Conservancy invites nominations for its 2010 Stewardship Awards! The awards honor individuals, families and organizations who maintain their properties in a way that respects the conservation values of the land and brings enjoyment to the community. Please call the office at (570) 945-6995 for a nomination form, or follow the link from our homepage at www.countrysideconservancy.org to print out a form. The nomination deadline is September 18, and award recipients will be recognized at our Annual Meeting in spring 2010.

Tenth Annual Auction

The Conservancy's Tenth Annual Auction took place at Allied Services Corporate Center in Clarks Summit on July 11. Barbara Cohen and "Von Storch" supplied the music, the inimitable Ken Rivenburg was our auctioneer, and a crowd of guests provided the energy. Bidding on over a

hundred Live and Silent Auction items went on into the evening, and spirits were not dampened by the periodic showers!

Many original works by artists of our region were a particular standout in the Auction lineup. And guests universally

praised the new location, courtesy of Allied Services, and the great food.

We warmly thank our Auction Chairs, Jim and Sharon Vipond; our Live Auction Chairs, Elaine Shepard and Kathleen Graff; our Silent Auction Chairs, Kristie Miller McMahon and Gretchen Ludders; and our other Auction Committee members: Julianne Adams Barrett, Nancy Brown, Caroline Seamans, DeDe Tersteeg, Maureen Walker, Carla Williams and several anonymous helpers for making this event our biggest fundraiser of the year once again.

We particularly wish to thank the staff of Allied Services, especially Michael Frey and his enormously capable staff who oversaw the dining end of the evening, Mike DePew of the print shop, and of course Allied Services CEO James Brady. We also extend special thanks to Ginader Jones and Co. for their help with



Auction Committee members: (front, l-r) Elaine Shepard, Kathleen Graff; (back, l-r) Kristie McMahon, Carla Williams, Jim and Sharon Vipond, Gretchen Ludders. Photo: Abington Journal Photos/Ben Freda

Live Auction Donors:

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financial arrangements, to Greystone Gardens, White's Country Floral and Beth Baker, Amy Broadbent and Sharon Vipond for floral donations and decorations.

We also thank our 2009 Auction Sponsors: Marworth and Riverfront Sports Complex (Sanctuary Society); Gertrude Hawk Chocolates, Merrill Lynch / Erickson Group, PNC Bank, Penn Security Bank & Trust Company, and Peoples National Bank (Stewards); and Action Personnel Services, Alliance Landfill/Apex Waste Services, First Liberty Bank & Trust, First National Community Bank, Gentex Corporation, Keystone Community Resources, Inc., William R. Lewis, CFP, Oliver Price & Rhodes, Pennstar Bank, P&G Paper Products, R. J. Walker Co., and Phil & Jon Stevens with Janney Montgomery Scott LLC (Protectors).

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!

Did you leave a bracelet or an umbrella at the Auction? Call us at 945-6995 if you think it may be yours.



Auction guests from Allied Services: (front, l-r) Michael Ferguson and Tiffany O'Hara, Michael and Sandy DePew; (back, l-r) Jim and Susan Brady, and Mary and Bill Conaboy. Photo: Abington Journal Photos/Ben Freda

Jean Colombo
Corky's Garden Path Greenhouses
Lisa Cunningham
D&D Organic Lawns
Emilie Deery, Emilie's Artistic Design
in Silver
Dietrich Theater
Dinner is Served!
Endless Mountains Outfitters
Teri Erickson
Essential Eating
Miss Feeney's Finery
Mary Felley
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Mark Webber
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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, and 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 Dorrance Belin's 71st birthday:

Hannah and J.D.

In honor of Ellie Hyde's birthday:



Gerri and Len Janus

(This gift is being placed in the Watershed Coalition fund to honor Ellie's service as Coalition Chair since 2007.)

In honor of Abby Peck:

Mr. William Clark

In memory of Genevieve Green:

Mr. and Mrs. Phil Graff

In memory of John L. Ryon, Jr.:

Mrs. Nancy Stahler

In memory of Paul Belin:

Mrs. Nancy Stahler

In memory of Connie McCole Umphred:

Mrs. Nancy Stahler

Stone Wall Workshop A Success

On July 18, Ken Ely led a stone wall work day at the Conservancy's Ziegler Preserve in Benton Township. Ken, a skilled stone wall builder and a great teacher, led an energetic group of volunteers in a hands-on learning experience. The group repaired a break in one old wall, cleaned up a sagging corner, and

improved a stone wall crossing to make it safer for walkers. Our thanks to Ken and the volunteers who took part! We hope to bring Ken back next year, so if you are interested in learning to build and restore stone walls, please call Mary or Rylan at 945-6995 to put your name on our list for future stone wall events.



Before



During



After

Footbridge open for business

The new footbridge at the end of Benton Road and Austin Road, downstream from the dam at Lackawanna State Park, is now open! Thanks to Lackawanna County, the State Park, and those heroic trail-building volunteers, you can now get all the way around Lackawanna Lake on trails and bridges in the State Park. So get out there, and in the immortal words of Manny Gordon: Enjoy, enjoy!



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.

Natural Gas Issues

As natural gas development expands in our region, the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition continues to organize informational events for the public.

At the Coalition's June meeting, Brian Oram of Wilkes University shared his knowledge and experience with gas development in the Marcellus Shale. Among Brian's top concerns is the very high levels of chlorides and salts in fracking wastewater. He suggested that people get their well water tested for both quality and quantity before gas drilling begins in their neighborhood.

On August 3 the Coalition held a public presentation on the geological and groundwater issues associated with natural gas development. The guest speaker was Professor Robert Cook, Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Keystone College. As a hydrogeologist, he was well positioned to shed light on geology and groundwater concerns. The potential for impacts to groundwater has become a top public concern as natural gas drilling moves forward.

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission has issued a permit to EXCO North Coast Energy to withdraw up to 91,000 gallons of water per day from the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek, downstream from Lackawanna State Park. EXCO recently submitted a second application, to withdraw almost 1 million gallons per day from the lower Tunkhannock just below its confluence with South Branch. The Coalition is offering its water quality data to the Commission for reference as it considers water withdrawal requests in and around the South Branch.

Other Watershed Events

The Watershed Coalition has offered to help Factoryville and Dalton work on stormwater management. The two boroughs, which lie in the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek watershed, are being required by the state Department of Environmental Protection to develop Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) in line with current best practices.

Stormwater is precipitation that hits the ground and runs off over the surface into storm drains, creeks and lakes, rather than being absorbed by the soil. It becomes a problem when trees are cut and land is paved over, actions that reduce nature's ability to absorb water into the ground. Flash floods, water ponding and flooded roads are symptoms that too much stormwater is running off over the surface rather than infiltrating into the soil and groundwater.

The Watershed Coalition can help teach residents how to reduce stormwater runoff and water pollution by planting trees and shrubs, using rain barrels, taking care when fertilizing lawns and handling chemicals around the home, and keeping pet waste under control.

The Coalition, by the good graces of the Lackawanna County Conservation District,

is monitoring the upper South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek for coliform bacteria in July and August. Monitoring sites are downstream of Chapman Lake and upstream of I-81. This will give us a baseline on what bacterial issues we may have in this part of the creek. Our thanks to Alana Roberts and the volunteers who are helping her collect samples.

Volunteers of the Coalition, the Conservancy, and Endless Mountains Outfitters continued to hack away at the Japanese Knotweed in Tunkhannock's Riverside Park in June and July. It was gratifying to see that even one or two "whacks" made inroads on the health and vigor of the invaders. We are now looking for a certified applicator who can help us hit the knotweed with a round of glyphosate in early fall. And next spring we'll start all over again! Thanks to the Riverside Park Commission for supporting this invasive-plant eradication effort.

Angela Lambert, Environmental Educator, will lead an evening kayak outing for Coalition friends at Lackawanna State Park on Wednesday, September 2 (rain date: Thursday, September 3). See "Upcoming Events" on page 2 for details.



Sunset at Lackawanna Lake, Lackawanna State Park.

**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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