

CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



New Protected Land in Susquehanna County

Countryside Conservancy recently completed a project with Wayne-Susquehanna R.E.S.C.U.E. to place a conservation easement on nearly 180 acres in Susquehanna County. This new conservation agreement will forever protect a family farm on the East Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek.

Acquisition of this easement was supported by Wayne-Susquehanna R.E.S.C.U.E., a grassroots environmental conservation organization that dates back to 1978. In 2003, R.E.S.C.U.E. received funds for use in protecting an important piece of the Wayne and Susquehanna County landscape. They started a long-running search, covering nearly a dozen different properties, that led at last to this landowner and this farm. Once the property was identified as a viable candidate, R.E.S.C.U.E. invited Countryside Conservancy to become involved as the legal holder of the conservation easement.



The East Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek flows through the protected farm.

Countryside Conservancy, dedicated to protecting lands and waters of the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed, was delighted to be a part of this project. The Conservancy drafted the easement document based on a series of site visits and discussions with the landowner and R.E.S.C.U.E. that took place over the course of more than a year. (Good planning for the land can't be rushed.)

The conservation easement will prohibit subdivision of this historic farm property while permitting farming, planned timbering and other selected activities to proceed. The East Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek and wetlands on the property are given added protection from disturbance under the terms of the agreement. The easement also leaves scope for no-surface-operations gas leasing, which would permit horizontal drilling for gas under the land but no disturbance of the surface soil or vegetation. The easement also allows for public access to the property by permission of the landowner, for recreational or educational purposes focused on the natural value and beauty of the property. Funds were also provided under this agreement toward a stewardship fund. This fund will help ensure that the Conservancy will have the resources to monitor and enforce the agreement forever, as the land passes from owner to owner over the generations.

This conservation easement was finalized and the project closed in late spring this year. The Conservancy is immensely grateful to the landowner and to the Board of Wayne-Susquehanna R.E.S.C.U.E. for their steadfast support of this project. We are honored to have a role in this great conservation achievement. Questions about this project may be addressed to Dr. Ken Mayers of R.E.S.C.U.E. at (570) 241-3487 or Rylan Coker of Countryside Conservancy at (570) 945-6995.

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, September 21, Tailgate Picnic at Meadowsweet Preserve.

Live music, wagon rides, wildlife, kids' games and more! Mountain biking in the morning before the Picnic. 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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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 Piece of Trolley Trail in Place

In May the Conservancy acquired ownership of a second section of the former Northern Electric Railway alignment, this time in La Plume Township. The 3-acre parcel is on the corner of Routes 6 & 11 and West La Plume Road, opposite the Lackawanna Dairy building (Darling's). Our sincere thanks to landowners Richard, Gordon and Mary Miller, who made this transaction possible. It was a pleasure to work with them.



Chicory in bloom on the new Trail parcel.

This property will provide a key link in the Conservancy's Trolley Trail project, including a potential trailhead and parking area. Containing over 1,700 feet of the old trolley right-of-way, the parcel provides a good walking corridor as well as views of forested areas, some unique historical features such as bridge/culvert structures, and scenic rock outcrops on the hillside.

In the short term, until longer sections of the Trail are improved and ready for public use, the Conservancy will focus on maintaining tree cover on this parcel, and preserving the green views along Routes 6 and 11.

Trails and Private Land

The "Trolley Trail" that the Conservancy is working to piece together will be a 7-mile trail connecting Route 6 communities from Clarks Summit to Factoryville, and will include a spur trail running to nearby Lackawanna State Park. The Conservancy has acquired ownership of certain trail sections, such as the parcel in La Plume mentioned above, which had been listed for sale for some time. In cases where the landowner was willing to permit public access but wanted to retain ownership over the land, the Conservancy has entered into "trail easement" agreements which allow for the creation of a trail across the property. Under the terms of the easement, that section of trail will be built, maintained and managed in whatever way the landowner and the Conservancy agree upon. Like a utility easement, a trail easement does not change the landowner's ownership of the land, it merely provides access to a part of the property.

Many landowners are concerned about increasing their liability by permitting the public to walk or bicycle over their lands. They will be glad to know that the Pennsylvania Recreational Use of Lands and Waters Act (RULWA) provides legal protection for any landowner who opens their land to the public for recreation free of charge (provided that any known hazards are clearly indicated). This law was passed specifically to encourage private landowners to open their lands to the public for outdoor recreation, and it has proved to be a solid legal tool.

The Conservancy's goal is to create a non-motorized recreational trail for our local communities. To reach that goal, we are willing to pursue trail easements, land acquisition, or whatever solution works best for each landowner we work with. If you'd like to learn more about the Trolley Trail, please call Rylan or Cheryl at 945-6995.

Tailgate Picnic Set for September 21



Countryside Conservancy invites you to join us in celebrating summer's end in the great outdoors! The Conservancy will hold its **14th Annual Tailgate Picnic on Sunday, September 21** at its Meadowsweet Preserve on Lily Lake Road, Abington Township. The Picnic starts at 2 pm and continues till dusk. Pack a picnic lunch and join us for this great neighborhood tradition!

Pat Acker and Abby Peck, chairs of this year's Picnic, are lining up a great afternoon. Our live band will be True North (Kenny Chilewski, James Estes, Cristina Cox and Larry Sokoloski), featuring classic country, folk and rock for all ages. The Acker family will set up an open-air grill to roast the

tenderest corn in the county, with toasted marshmallows for dessert. Margaret Hull of Spring Hills Farm in North Abington Township will provide free horse-drawn wagon rides for young and old alike.

A new guest this year is Angie Colarusso, wildlife rehabilitator from Second Chance Wildlife Center in Wyoming County. Angie will lead a presentation for the kids with some of the wild creatures she has rescued and rehabilitated. Other children's activities and games will be organized throughout the afternoon. 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). A mountain bike tour of the trail is also planned for Sunday morning before the picnic (see below for details).

Picnic admission is free to Conservancy members. Non-members can join at a special \$15 rate and get their picnic admission included. 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.



Meeting the Sheep Down on the Farm

Eighteen adults and children met at Spring Hills Farm in North Abington on August 2nd to take a walk over lands conserved through a permanent agreement between the Hull family and the Conservancy. This conservation easement, covering 125 acres of



woods and wetlands, was created ten years ago and is the Conservancy's oldest.

The visitors enjoyed an introduction to the farm's maple sugar operations along the way, and finished up at the sheep shed to meet the new crop of Jacob Sheep lambs recently born on the farm. They are adorable!

Our thanks to Margaret Hull and Susan Hull Constantine, who hosted the farm visit, and also to their sisters Elizabeth Hull Zeitlyn and Lucy Hull. The four sisters worked together to place the conservation easement on the land back in 1998.

The Hulls' farm grows and sells organic Christmas trees in addition to their maple syrup and sheep operations. Call the farm at 563-1871 to find out more!

3rd Annual Trail Ride Scheduled

Our annual thank-you Mountain Bike ride through Countryside Conservancy protected lands and parts of Lackawanna State Park will be held on **Sunday, September 21** (the same date as our Tailgate Picnic—see above). The ride will start at 9 am on the trailhead at Meadowsweet Preserve on Lily Lake Road. Riders are asked to make a \$20 minimum donation, which will include admission to the Picnic. Please come out and support the Countryside Conservancy's work in expanding its lands for recreational use.



Conservation Gets the High Bid at Ninth Annual Auction

The Conservancy's Ninth Annual Auction, held at Keystone College on July 12, was a great hit! About 200 guests enjoyed the outdoor ambience and mingled under the big tent to the strains of great live jazz, supporting the Conservancy's work by bidding on a dazzling array of silent and live auction items.

We warmly thank our Auction Chairs,



Amy T. Broadbent & Julianne Adams Barrett; our Live Auction Chairs, Kathleen Graff and Elaine Shepard; our Silent Auction Chairs, Gretchen Ludders and Kristie Miller McMahon; and our other Auction Committee members: Karen Barren, Ali Breig, Penny Davis, Eleanore Ginader, George Ginader, Erin Kane, Elizabeth Karazim-Horchos, Lisabeth Maletta, Lori McHale, Caroline Seamans, Karen Thomas, Jim Vipond and Amanda Von Rudenburg for making this a standout event!

We also thank our auctioneer, Ken Rivenburg of Rivenburg's Auction Gallery, and our Masters of Ceremonies, Curt and Phil Stevens, who kept the bidding lively. We thank the staff of Keystone College and Sodexo, especially Allyson Edwards and Crystal Seigle, for giving us a beautiful and stress-free evening. We also

extend special thanks to Ginader Jones and Co LLP for their help with financial arrangements, to Jane Bovard and her team of community volunteers for floral arrangements, and to Karen Thomas for her donation of wonderful door prizes.

We particularly wish to thank Laura Craig Galleries for their support in facilitating the donation of art by four extremely



Live Auction Donors:

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Silent Auction Donors:

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Barbara Cohen

talented artists whom they represent: Karl Neuroth, Karen Reid, Nancy Ruch and Thomas Wise. It was wonderful to be able to feature their work at the Auction.

We also thank our 2008 Auction Sponsors: Marworth and Riverfront Sports Complex (Sanctuary Society); Action Personnel Services, Alliance Landfill/ Apex Waste Services, Gentex Corporation, PNC, Penn Security Bank & Trust Company, and Peoples National Bank (Stewards); and Condron & Company Inc., Erickson Group - Merrill Lynch, First Liberty Bank and Trust, Keystone Community Resources, Knowles Associates Insurance, Oliver Price & Rhodes, Pennstar Bank, Procter & Gamble and R. J. Walker Co. (Protectors); and our Host Sponsor, Keystone College, which provided the perfect venue once again.

Our warm 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. The Auction simply wouldn't happen without you!

Did you leave a lady's cardigan or knit jacket at the Auction? One was

found at the check-out area and no one has claimed it. Call 945-6995 if you think it may be yours.



Silent Auction Donors: (Continued)

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A Friend Moves West



The Conservancy would like to extend its congratulations and best wishes to Tim Eichner, Director of the Willary Water Resource Center and longtime Keystone College friend. He is

moving west to take up a position as a Water Resource Specialist with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Tim has been instrumental over the years in making the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition a success, in producing maps for the Conservancy and the Coalition, in leading educational activities on Conservancy lands, and in a hundred other ways. He has always been a joy to work with, and while we will miss him sorely, we wish him all the best as he makes the big move to Kalispell.

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 others. These gifts will be placed in the Conservancy's Land Fund to support our land protection activities throughout the region.

In memory of James A. Rowlands:
Lynn H. Nichols

In honor of Adrian L. Miller's 90th birthday:
Ruth P. Miller

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 also thank Amy T. Broadbent for donating a gift membership for Laurie T. Tuchel. Gift memberships are another way to share your love of the land with those you care about!

Little Rocky Glen: Meet our Land Stewards



Land Steward Mike Koval at Little Rocky Glen.

Countryside Conservancy is extremely lucky to have two great people serving as land stewards at Little Rocky Glen: Michael Koval and Paul Maleski.

Mike is an Abington Heights graduate who now lives in Clinton Township with his wife Lisa and their son Michael Jr. Mike is a State Police corporal who serves at the Gibson Barracks. Mike says he "grew up outdoors," hunting and fishing and just spending time outside. His experience taught him to appreciate and respect the outdoors.

Asked why he took on this part-time position with the Conservancy, Mike says simply that he believes in the Conservancy's mission of land and water conservation. He is concerned about sprawl and about the fact that today's children are growing more and more detached from nature. He would like to see kids spending more time outdoors with their parents and families, and he sees Little Rocky Glen as a great place to do just that.

Mike enjoys the peace, quiet and beauty of the Glen every day he comes in. One highlight on many mornings is a visit from a great blue heron that hangs out on the creek. Mike expresses some disappointment in people who litter or otherwise fail to respect the place, but he really enjoys the opportunity to be there and knows that most visitors do too. He encourages visitors to the Glen to enjoy themselves responsibly, and pack out what they pack in.

Mike was our first stewardship hire, brought on staff in 2006 to help with the

influx of visitors to Little Rocky Glen. He was joined in 2007 by Paul Maleski. Paul is a Riverside graduate, originally from Moosic, who now lives in Clinton Township with his wife Denise and his two daughters, Taryn (13) and Lauryn (11). Paul is a Navy veteran who served aboard the USS Kitty Hawk, and he has just completed his twentieth year of service with the State Police. Paul, a corporal, has served at a variety of barracks around northeastern Pennsylvania, and now serves at the Dunmore Barracks. He says he "fell in love with Wyoming County" when he was first stationed at Tunkhannock.

Paul, like Mike, spent a lot of his younger years in the outdoors. He began visiting his Uncle Vince's hunting cabin in Susquehanna County when he was eight, and he still recalls his uncle's love of the land and his constant activity caring for the property. Paul carries on that tradition today with his own daughters on their Susquehanna County property; he hunts and fishes with them as well as caring for the land. He views his work at Little Rocky Glen in a similar vein, seeking the opportunity to protect a beautiful place and leave it a little bit better than when he came.

Paul notes that most visitors to the Glen truly appreciate the natural beauty and the opportunity to be there. He is glad to be able to make a difference in preserving, maintaining and protecting this wonderful spot. He has one word of advice for visitors to the Glen: The rocks in the gorge can be extremely slippery and dangerous when wet. Please be careful, and if the rocks are wet stay off of them.

The Conservancy is very lucky to have Mike and Paul caring for Little Rocky Glen and its users. We thank them for their stellar service, and salute them for their dedication to the land. If you see someone in a blue Conservancy staff shirt next time you're at the Glen, please introduce yourself! You may also see them from time to time at some of our other properties, helping with various stewardship tasks.

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.

Members of the Watershed Coalition enjoyed an evening out on the water at Lackawanna State Park with Angela Lambert on July 18. Nine brave souls turned up to paddle the lake under moonlight... however, the moon didn't favor us with an appearance until we were nearly finished! Being out on the water in the dusk under flights of bats was a truly memorable experience.

The Watershed Coalition had a display at the fourth annual "Celebrate Our River" event at Tunkhannock's Riverside Park on July 26. It was delightful to be there with the live music and the great crowd. Congratulations to the Wyoming County Cultural Center for putting on a great event once again!

The Watershed Coalition will conduct another litter pick-up along Route 632 between Dalton and Waverly in September. Please call Mary at 945-6995 if you'd like to join our clean-up team!

In July, the Coalition again received support from C-SAW to have Brian Oram of Wilkes University conduct quality-control on our water quality monitoring. This professional back-up is invaluable as the group seeks to improve its equipment and the skills of its volunteers. Our thanks to Lackawanna County Watershed Specialist Alana Roberts for obtaining this assistance!

Trail Update

by Bill Booth, Countryside Conservancy Treasurer

Keeping the trails in good shape during the summer months can be a challenge, what with the occasional gusty thunderstorm and the rapid growth of brush and grasses. We checked in with trail builder extraordinaire Joe Tierney to get an update on how the trails in and around Lackawanna State Park are looking. Joe stressed that volunteer attendance at work days early in the season was a little light, which means there is a great opportunity for new volunteers from the Countryside Conservancy's membership to get involved with some hands-on stewardship work.

Work days were held on June 21 and July 12. In June most of the effort was in removing dozens of fallen trees from trails throughout the park and on adjoining Conservancy lands. The July work day was primarily dedicated to cutting back brush and some feisty 'prickers' that had virtually sealed off important sections of the trails.

Hats off to Joe and his legion of loyal volunteers for their terrific heartfelt work on the trails. As of early August, the network was in excellent shape – although there always remains work to be done!

Speaking of work, we hear that Lackawanna County will soon begin construction of the new pedestrian bridge behind the dam near the end of Benton Road (near the intersection of Lily Lake Road). This is an exciting project that will replace the old and dangerous vehicular bridge near that site. Once completed, it will reinvigorate trail use and access in that area of the park.

Upcoming Work Days:

Trail Maintenance Days are scheduled for the following dates (call 945-6995 for information):

- **August 30, 2008** – 9 am. Meet at Austin Road (coming from Waverly on Rt. 407 North, turn left onto 438. At the top of the hill, make a left onto dirt road (Austin Road) and follow it down to the dam.
- **September 13, 2008** – 9 am. Austin Road.
- **October 5, 2008** – 9 am. Meet at Trostle Pond (Parking lot on Rt. 407 just North of Rt. 438).
- **November 2, 2008** – 9 am. Trostle Pond.

Volunteers should wear boots and heavy gloves. Extra tools will be available, but heavy duty hoes, loppers, pick-axes, and shovels are always welcome!

Special Thanks!

In the category of above and beyond: Thanks to Kevin Pender and his group of volunteers who look after trails at Prompton State Park near Waymart. This team did a heroic job of cleaning up a huge amount of storm damage and fallen trees following an early June storm that affected nearly the entire 20-mile trail network.

Also, thanks to Mark Fowler, a recent Abington Heights graduate who for his Senior Community Service Project rebuilt the old flood-damaged footbridge at the southern end of Lake Lackawanna near the boat launch area in Lackawanna State Park.

Accreditation Update

Countryside Conservancy's application for national accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission continues to move forward. Conservancy staff and Board members held a conference call with members of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission on July 15. The call identified a few areas on which the LTAC will request additional information from the Conservancy. We hope to receive a final decision on our application by accreditation later this year or early in 2009.

**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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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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