

Linn Log

The Newsletter of the
Merrill W. Linn
Land & Waterways
Conservancy

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PO Box 501, Lewisburg, PA 17837
conserve@ptd.net 570-524-8666 or 522-0487 FAX 570-524-8743
www.LinnConservancy.org

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Fall 2005

Educational Events:

Montandon Marsh Nature Walk and Picnic on October 2

Montandon Marsh will be the site of a nature walk and picnic on Sunday, October 2, beginning at 2 PM. Learn about the diverse vegetation and wildlife of this unique Conservancy-protected wetland firsthand from Bucknell University Professor of Biology Steve Jordan, PhD. After the walk, a picnic featuring grilled hot dogs and picnic fare will be offered from 3 - 4:30 PM.

This event is open to the public. Registration for the walk and/or picnic is appreciated, but not required. From Route 405 S (River Road), follow the signs and ballons past May's Drive In to the entrance adjacent to Bucknell View trailer park. Long pants and sturdy shoes are recommended.

To register for the walk and picnic or for more information, call 524-8666 or email **conserve@ptd.net**. In case of severe weather, the event will be held on October 9 from 2-4:30 PM.



Marsh Reeds

Dale's Ridge Geology Walk Set for October 30



View from Dale's Ridge Trail

Join us for a walk with Geologist Dick Nickelsen on the Dale's Ridge Trail, Sunday, October 30, at 1:30 PM. Prof. Nickelsen served as a founding Board member of the Linn Conservancy and is uniquely qualified to lead this educational walk. He helped lay out the original Dale's Ridge Trail and served as the Conservancy's first Dale's Ridge Chief Trail Steward.

Nickelsen notes "Dale's Ridge is situated at the center, the very heart, of the big downfold or syncline that defines the Buffalo Valley. It provides excellent views of the plunging folds of resistant rocks that define its northern limb. Views to the west show the western end of the Buffalo Valley and part of the south limb made up of Jack's Mountain and Shamokin Ridge. The best part of the walk is the views of prime farmland surrounding Dale's Ridge, where rich soils derived from a 5000 foot section of shale and limestone are intensively farmed."

A geologic map and section will be provided for each person and each participant will be helped to understand the plunging folds and clear relationship between bedrock geology and landscape that can be more easily seen from Dale's Ridge than from any other place in the valley. Participants should assemble at the Dale's Ridge Trail parking lot on Strawbridge Road. Call 524-8666 for more information.

Our Environment Matters:

Montandon Marsh Highlighted in Pennsylvania Land Trust Alliance Publication

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PALTA), with the help of the Conservancy, has published a stunning color brochure titled "Conserving Montandon Marsh, *Working Together for the Future*" as part of its *Stories of Land and People* series. A copy of the publication is included in this Fall 2005 issue of the *Linn Log*. The piece provides a thoughtful account of the remarkable action taken to preserve the natural value of the wetlands complex.

The publication features interviews with key people involved in protecting an important parcel in the marsh owned by Central Builders Supply Company through a conservation easement with the Linn Conservancy. A conservation easement is an agreement limiting activity on a property to conservation purposes while keeping the property in the landowner's ownership and control. Tony Markunas, owner of Central Builders Supply, Professor Allan Schweinsberg of Bucknell University, avid birder and Linn site steward, and Jeannette Lasansky, past President and former Coordinator of the Linn Conservancy, all provide insights into this moving story about the protection of a uniquely diverse riparian wetland ecosystem.

The brochure debuted at the 2005 PALTA conference held in Strasburg, Lancaster County. Additional copies are available at the Montandon Post Office or by calling (570) 524-8666. The brochure can also be viewed at the PALTA website, www.conserveland.org/stories/cmm1.



Sand Dunes at Montandon Marsh

Annual Dinner Featured Geologist and Awards

R. Craig Kochel, PhD, Professor of Geology at Bucknell University was the featured speaker at the Conservancy's annual dinner on May 4. Prof. Kochel's speech "Attitude Adjustment Needed in the Watershed – Let the Earth Breathe!" focused on the prevention of encroaching erosion and featured dramatic photos of the profound effect that a lack of foresight and planning can have on communities. In collaboration with colleagues at the U.S. Geological Survey and James Madison University, Professor Kochel is conducting research on blockfields and related features in the central Appalachians and he recently completed the mapping of Pleistocene breakout flood deposits and surfaces in Union County.

Two outstanding citizens were also honored at the dinner which was held at the Carriage Corner restaurant in Mifflinburg.

Florence Pyle was awarded the Conservancy's Service Award for her many significant contributions that have improved the quality of life in our community. Throughout her life, she has been particularly active in the areas of education and conservation. The award presented to Florence Pyle was commemorated with a lovely wildflower print created by Andrey Avinoff.

*President Wayne McDiffett Presents
Florence Pyle with a Service Award*



*Board Member Geoff Goodenow presents
a Stewardship Award to Mary Koons*

Mary Koons was awarded the Conservancy's Stewardship Award in thanks

for her many contributions in support of the Conservancy's efforts since its founding in 1988. She has designed and produced several quilts which she then donated to the Conservancy as sale or raffle items to benefit the organization. In the early 1990's, Mary entrusted her small farm near Mifflinburg's Hassenplug covered bridge to the Conservancy. By placing it under a conservation easement with Linn, the property is forever protected as open space within the borough. Mary recently added an adjacent parcel of land, on the east side of 4th Street and south of the covered bridge, to the existing easement. Mary's generous donation provides added protection for a section of the Buffalo Creek watershed through Mifflinburg. Mary was presented with a framed photograph by Ed Culver to commemorate her award.

"Beer, Brats and Brass" Featured at Lewisburg Arts Festival

The Linn Conservancy's "Beer, Brats and Brass" fund-raising event, held on April 30 at the Packwood House courtyard, joined the lineup of Lewisburg Arts Festival activities this year. Despite rainy skies and a power outage that affected virtually every booth and event at the Arts Festival, the event proved to be a great success.

"Beer, Brats and Brass," coordinated by the Conservancy Development Committee, recalled the museum's earlier days when the Packwood House served as a tavern and a hotel for travelers in the Susquehanna Valley. The event featured beer tasting, conducted by award-winning Bullfrog Brewery, offering four distinct varieties for sampling. Grilled bratwurst sandwiches, German potato salad, apple strudel, and other traditional foods, along with non-alcoholic beverages, completed the menu for this family-oriented event. Entertainment was provided by the Columbia BrassWorks Brass Quintet.

In addition to raising funds for the environmental efforts of the Conservancy, the event provided an opportunity to learn about the importance of clean water in brewing and how we can all work to improve water quality in our local waterways.

Caring for Communities Builds on Success *by Diane Specht, Education Committee Chairperson*

Caring for Communities, the Linn Conservancy's series of family-oriented, environmental events, scored a major success this past spring. The educational program emphasized preserving special lands by focusing on animals, plants, and habitat issues as barometers of environmental well-being. This year the program expanded to a full month of weekend activities, and was—to quote one Linn Board member—"a jewel in our crown."

The Caring for Communities successes included:

- WKOK *Roundtable* broadcast.
- Shamokin Mountain Trail Walk.

- ⦿ A native plant sale and landscaping presentation held in conjunction with a display of the Conservancy's Invasive Plant Exhibit.
- ⦿ Escorted tour of Paradise Valley Organic Farm.
- ⦿ Buffalo Creek Canoe and Kayak ride.
- ⦿ Allenwood Gamelands and Lost Town of Alvira Tour.
- ⦿ Earth Day Wildflower Walk.
- ⦿ The Grand Event: live animal presentations, crafts including building wood bat houses.
- ⦿ Evening Sounds and Owl Prowl.
- ⦿ Arbor Day Tree Walk



All Conservancy members are invited to bring their talents to this important Conservancy program. To volunteer, contact Jeannette Lasansky at lasansky@bucknell.edu or Sue Auman at conserve@ptd.net.

Conservancy Engages in Montandon Community Days

The Conservancy hosted the lead-off event for the Second Montandon Community Days on May 28. Conservancy President Wayne McDiffett led a well-attended 8 AM birding walk into the Montandon Marsh. The Conservancy's informational booth stood alongside the food stands and craft booths and the Conservancy featured showings of the Montandon Marsh video in the West Chillisquaque Township Building. Participants learned about the unique marsh habitat and enjoyed an old fashioned community event at the same time.

"It's really great to see the Montandon community learn about and take pride in this amazing natural area in its own back yard," said Linn Conservancy Board Member Lettie Davis. Lettie, along with Jeannette Lasansky, served as a member of the Montandon Community Days planning committee, aiding the group in producing a very successful event in its second year.

People, Businesses, and Organizations Effect Change:

Photos Fundraiser Features Conserved Land

Local photographer John Gardner, owner of The Lewisburg Studio in Lewisburg, has graciously volunteered to assist the Linn Conservancy in developing a set of photographic products to sell over the upcoming holiday season, to raise awareness of the Conservancy's properties under conservation easement. These will consist of nature closeups and scenic shots depicting the properties. The selection will consist of postcards and photos that can be mounted or framed. Sue Auman, Tom Gibson, Geoff Goodenow, and John Tonzetich are working with Gardner on the project. More information on this project will be available as the holiday season approaches.

Making Tracks *by Sue Auman, Coordinator*

Since stepping into the role of Coordinator in January, I've had the opportunity to meet and talk with many Conservancy members and volunteers. Through Caring for Communities, at the Annual Dinner, and participating in our various fund raising events, I've enjoyed meeting and working alongside friends of the Conservancy whose passion for conservation is contagious. My sincere thanks to those of you who have gone out of your way to welcome me and help me get acclimated.

"How can I become more involved in the Linn Conservancy's conservation efforts?" is a question I have been asked frequently over the past months. In response to this, we've updated the volunteer page of our website, www.linnconservancy.org/volunteer.html, to include a full list of our volunteer opportunities. Examples of current opportunities include Native Plant Sale coordinator, trail steward, graphic arts

assistance, and *Linn Log/Daily Item* column writers. Simply fill in the easy to use form on the webpage, or call or e-mail our office to find out more about the volunteer opportunities.

I hope to see you at the exciting fall educational programs featured in this issue of the *Linn Log*. The *Linn Log* is our principal method of sharing news and events with you, but many of our members like to stay in touch electronically. If you would like to be reminded about Conservancy special events and/or receive this newsletter by email, send us an email at conserve@ptd.net. We'll send along periodic reminders of upcoming events and Conservancy news. And do stop by our website, www.linnconservancy.org, frequently. Upcoming events and news releases are featured prominently on our home page

I'm honored to serve the Conservancy as Coordinator and look forward to working closely with the Board of Directors, members, and volunteers in helping the Linn Conservancy to be the local leader in land preservation

Protecting Private Conservation: Update

As reported in the Spring 2005 issue of the *Linn Log*, January 27, 2005 marked the release of a report by the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation which shocked the land trust community. The report proposed major decreases in federal tax deductions for conservation easements and bargain sales. The Joint Committee proposed that *deductions for conservation easements be limited to 33% of appraised value. No deduction would be allowed for the donation of an easement on land used for a personal residence.*

The Committee also proposed changing the deductions associated with donations or bargain sales of land by limiting *such donations to the owner's "basis"*—that is, the cost of the land plus any capital improvements made over the years.

As you can imagine, these proposals would greatly impact our conservation work. Saving land is often the primary motivation for donating a conservation easement, but we know that tax deductions enable many more people to donate. The potential tax deductions associated with donations help us make the case for conservation.

Taking Action. Land trust organizations across the nation were galvanized into action by these drastic recommendations. The Land Trust Alliance, www.lta.org, responded with a strong message and call to members for immediate action. Locally, Linn Conservancy Coordinator Sue Auman, along with representatives of neighboring Conservancies met with Pennsylvania State Senator Jake Corman (R) Senate District 34 and Roger A. Madigan (R) Senate District 23 and their staff to inform them about the impact that this proposal will have on their constituents. State Representative and Linn Conservancy member Russ Fairchild was also contacted and subsequently met with Senators Santorum and Specter about this issue in Washington D.C.

Results to Date. This spring the Senate Finance Committee held two hearings on "The Tax Code and Land Conservation." At the first hearing, Senators Santorum (R-PA), Baucus (D-MT), Schumer (D-NY), Jeffords (I-VT), Bunning (R-KY), Wyden (D-OR), and Rockefeller (D-WV) all spoke in favor of continuing conservation tax incentives. A copy of Senator Santorum's letter to Finance Committee Chair Charles Grassley can be viewed at www.lta.org/publicpolicy/santorum_033005.pdf.

At the June hearing, Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance, presented testimony on the good work of land trusts across the country, calling for reasonable reforms that target abusers without preventing good conservation. The hearing was attended by eleven Senators, nearly all of whom made strong statements on the value of conservation in their state. More good news was announced in July, when the National Governors' Association passed a resolution supporting the current tax incentives for conservation easements, and opposing the Joint Committee on Taxation's approach.

This hard work has clearly made a difference, but major challenges remain. The Finance Committee staff clearly intends to change the law in a number of areas. Their report contains a number of recommendations of interest to land trusts. The details of these proposals are still unclear.

You can help by: contacting Senators and Representatives to encourage them to support the continuation of conservation tax incentives. Email and regular addresses can be found at www.legis.state.pa.us/ or call or email our office 524-8666 or conserve@ptd.net for addresses.

BCWA Stream Stewardship Continues *by Hannah Holm, BCWA Board member*

The Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance (BCWA) of the Merrill W. Linn Land and Waterways Conservancy continues to press forward with activities to promote good stewardship of the environment in the Buffalo Creek watershed.

Buffer Planting and Stream Bank Clean-up Planned - Volunteers Needed

The BCWA is planning a buffer planting and a stream bank clean-up for this fall. The planting is scheduled for October 15; the clean-up is scheduled for November 5. Many thanks to Joyce Beaver, who has graciously volunteered to coordinate the clean-up. We need volunteers for both activities. To sign up and get location information, please email buffalocreek@dejazzd.com or phone 570-837-3409 or 570-524-8666.

Monitoring Project Up and Running

Since June 2005, teams of volunteers have been monitoring eight sites on and near the main stem of Buffalo Creek, using kits purchased with Growing Greener grant funds. Many thanks to Thom Fantaskey for coordinating these teams.

Public Education Activities

The BCWA received a \$4,500 grant to educate residents of the Buffalo Creek watershed about water quality issues and protection efforts affecting Buffalo Creek and its tributaries. The BCWA is using the grant funding to:

- Host public events to raise awareness of water quality issues and protection efforts.
- Provide information to landowners along Buffalo Creek and its tributaries about the benefits of planting trees along stream banks and how to participate in planting programs.
- Publish a newsletter twice a year that features the watershed protection activities and public events organized by the BCWA.
- Upgrade the BCWA website to provide a better source of information about the Buffalo Creek Watershed and BCWA activities.
- Develop an organizational information/ membership brochure.
- Mail a questionnaire and information on the benefits of streamside plantings to all land-owners along Buffalo Creek and its tributaries.
- Host a public meeting on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program; the Program pays for planting trees along streams and other conservation measures. Featured Speaker: Nancy DiFiore of the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Funding for this grant was provided by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund through a Section 319 Federal Clean Water Act grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency, administered by PA Department of Environmental Protection.

T-shirts and Caps with New BCWA Logo Now Available!

The following logo can now be seen on stylish caps and shirts around the watershed:



Caps are dark blue with buff lettering; shirts are natural with blue type

and also feature a drawing of a stone bridge and the BCWA mission statement on the back. Caps are \$15, shirts are \$12. To order yours, email buffalocreek@dejazzd.com or phone 570-837-3409 or 570-524-8666.

Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up Date is October 16

Join us for a Linn Conservancy Adopt-a-Highway cleanup held on October 16 at 1 PM. Volunteers will pick up litter in a two-mile stretch of Wildwood and Red Ridge Road along Penns Creek west of Route 104.

The Adopt-a-Highway anti-litter program serves to clean the highways for Pennsylvania citizens, highway users, and for the millions of tourists who visit our state each year. The program allows us to become special caretakers of the state roadways.

We appreciate the help given over the past years from those individuals who regularly volunteer. A special thanks to Jo Reilly for leading the clean up efforts and to volunteer Joe Keller. New participants are needed and welcomed. Meet at 1 PM at the pavilion and plan to work for an hour or two.

Sheary Grant Awarded to Conservancy for R.B. Winter State Park

An Edna M. Sheary grant was recently awarded to the Linn Conservancy on behalf of R.B. Winter State Park's for the upgrade of Environmental Learning Center Educational Resources. The \$10,626 grant will be used to purchase a



wide variety of materials which will enhance the Center's children's library, computer center, puzzles, games, models, microscope center, aquariums, and display of central Pennsylvania mounted wildlife.

Over the past year alone, ten thousand attendees experienced interpretive programs or toured the Center's facilities. Since 1996, more than 100,000 people have visited the Halfway Run Environmental Learning Center at R.B. Winter State Park and actively participated in its programs and events. The Center is an important environmental education hub for area young people and their families and friends. The Linn Conservancy is proud to partner with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in ensuring the future success of local environmental

programming at R.B. Winter State Park.

R.B. Winter State Park Environmental Learning Center

Members Help Linn Conservancy Meet Its Goals Through Gifts and Time

Thanks to those who assisted with the Conservancy's *Annual Dinner 2005*: Owen Anderson, Nancy & Roger Curran, Geoff Goodenow, Sue Iddings and The Carriage Corner Restaurant, Craig Kochel, Wayne McDiffett, Jan & Celia Peterson, Diane Specht, and Bill Stein of Stein's Greenhouse.

Thank you to the following, many of whom are Conservancy members, for their work at last spring's *Caring for Communities* events:

Allenwood Gameland's staff Tom Smith and Wayne Wall, Owen Anderson, Andrea Bashore, Mark Berg, Mary Ann Halladay Bierly of R.B. Winter State Park, Dahle Bingaman, Shanon Burkland, Ruth Burnham & Wayne McDiffett, Greg Bonsall, (add in name of wood donation), the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance, Mandy Burbage, Julie Cooper, Country Cupboard, Clare Coyne, Roger Curran, Lettie Davis, Bob Deffner, Judy Ellis, Jake Engle, Neal Fogle from Penn State Extension, Roy Fontaine, Tom Gibson, Brian Gockley and the Lewisburg Shade Tree Commission, Geoff Goodenow, Robyn Graboski, Hannah Holm, Jeannette Lasansky, Shawn McLaughlin, Saskia Madelener, Mark Spiro, Carl & Faye Oberheim, Clyde Peeling, Jan Peterson, Betsy & Allan Quant of Canoe Susquehanna, Gary Slear, John Snook, Kathryn Kopchik & Steve Styers, Joe Southerton, Diane Specht, John Tonzetich, Union County Historical Society, Jace & Carla Watson, WKOK, Bucky Zeigler of Paradise Valley Organic Farm, and Dotti & Terry Zimmerman. Thanks to the Lewisburg Garden Club, Country Cupboard, the Mifflinburg Garden Club, and Octoraro Native Plant Nursery for sponsoring the Native Plant Sale. Thanks to the Union County Conservation District and the Union County Planning Commission for helping to underwrite the costs of *Caring for Community* events.

Thanks to the following for their work on *Montandon Community Days*: Lettie Davis, Ashley Dunlop, Geoff Goodenow, Jeannette Lasansky, Diane Specht, Kathryn Kopchik & Steven Styers, and Wayne McDiffett.

Thanks to those who assisted with the *Beer, Brass and Brats* event: Judy & Owen Anderson, Jim Apple, Chloe, Ruby and Brian Auman, Roger & Nancy Curran, Ashley Dunlop, Edwina Eger, Judy Ellis, Senator Russ Fairchild, Joan & John Fernsler, Roy Fontaine, Giant Foods, Terry Hawbaker & The Bullfrog Brewery, Connie Heyman, Sarah Kelly and the Packwood House Museum, Saskia Madelener, Grace Mahon & Lewisburg Arts Council, Wayne McDiffett, Dale Orris & Columbia Brass Works, Jan Peterson, Jim Mathias,

Rosalyn Richard, Alex Schmidt, Diane Specht, Chris Stratton, Connie Timm and the Market Street Group, Tulpehocken Springs Water, WalMart, Weis Market, and Terri & Dotti Zimmerman

Thanks to those who were instrumental in preparing and administering the *Edna M. Sheary Grant*: Bob Deffner, MaryAnn Haladay-Bierly, Jeannette Lasansky, Sue Travis, and Judy Ellis.

Thanks to Jo Reilly and Joe Keller for their help on the *Adopt-a-Highway* Clean-Up Effort. Thanks also to Steve Grey from Penn Dot for removing the bags of debris.

Thanks to Lewisburg High School students who participated in the clean up of *Strawbridge Road and at the Dale Engle Walker House*: Eric Abla, Matt Apker, Kim Benfer, Jeff Bruce, Michael Cornelius, Matt Derman, Maggie Gardner, Drew Griffith, Ryan Pappas, Jonathan Phillips, Sue Rapp, and David Schleg. Thanks to Buffalo Township for providing the dumpster and removing the trash.

Thanks to David & Vicki Heberlig and D.J. Keen who **prepared this newsletter for mailing**.

Thanks to our *volunteer trail stewards* for their help in maintaining the Conservancy's trails: to *Dale's Ridge Trail stewards* Tom Duck, Geoff Goodenow, Harry Huff, Jim & Laurie Knight family, Albert Mabus, Pete Macky, Tom Travis (Chief Trail Steward), Bob Rapp and scout troop, Sue Rapp and Lewisburg High School students, Allen Schweinsberg, and Jim Swan; to *Mary Koons Trail stewards* Joe Southerton (Chief Trail Steward), Lyle Hobart, and Wayne McDiffett; to *Mohn Mill Trail stewards* Joseph Priestley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and Owen Anderson (Chief Steward); to *Montandon Marsh steward* Allan Schweinsberg; to *Shamokin Mt. Trail stewards* Warren Abrahamson and Wayne McDiffett.

Thanks to the Mifflinburg Garden Club for its *donation* to support the work of the Conservancy.

A *gift in honor* of Joyce Kunkle was given to the Conservancy by Ella Jane and Gerry Kunkle.

Thanks to members who, from March through August, have made *additional financial gifts and/or increased their level of giving* in order to help better support the Conservancy's work: Anne & David Goehring and the Rev. William Weary.

Welcome to new members: Chris Fabian, Allan & Betsy Quant, Sam & Paige Parks, Ann Sherpick & Walter Stewart, Boyd & Jane Gibson, and Shawn McLaughlin.

PLEASE NOTE: We can now send you the *Linn Log* as a PDF file instead of through the mail. If you are interested in receiving the newsletter in a PDF format instead of through the mail, let us know and we will start sending them that way starting with the next *Log*.

Thanks to the following members who have chosen to do so: Catherine P. Blair, Madeline Blamble, Donald & Dorothy Douglas, Rosaria Gabriele, Arlyne Hoyt, George M. Jenks, Karen Knisely, Diana Lasansky, William & Jeannette Lasansky, Andrew Mack, and Dotti & Terry Zimmerman.

It will soon be time to collect membership dues for 2006. Please renew now. It will save the Conservancy postage for dues notices. Thank you for your past support!
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