

Linn Log

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

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Fall 2007

Spring Follow-Up:

Conservancy's Annual Dinner a Success

The Merrill Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy presented two awards and heard from Professor **Warren Abrahamson**, keynote speaker, at its annual dinner in May.

Conservancy Board member **Roger Curran** received the 2007 Service Award. Roger has served many functions during his years with the organization, from being President to assisting with cleanup projects. As President, he was instrumental in the formation of the Heritage Club and brought Conservancy membership to a new high. In 1998, he became editor of the *Linn Log*, the group's newsletter, and has served as Secretary of the Board for the past six years. He often represents the Conservancy before civic clubs and conservation organizations.

Allan Grundstrom, recipient of the Stewardship Award, played a primary role in the formation of the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance (BCWA) in 1992, and continues to serve as President. Under his leadership, BCWA received two "Growing Greener" grants to restore parts of Buffalo Creek. Allan's tireless commitment to the continued improvement of the Buffalo Creek Watershed serves as a model for excellent stewardship.

Professor Abrahamson provided a stimulating presentation on “Conservation’s Challenges: Global Problems Make Local Problems”. Through exceptional photography, research, and use of local examples, banquet attendees gained an unusually “personalized” perspective on the impact of widespread problems such as invasive species (among other issues) on our local environment.

2007 Caring for Communities Events for You, Family, and Friends

Despite the usual spring rain playing havoc with some events, the fourth Linn Conservancy and Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance “Caring for Communities” celebration was a rousing success in April, as the event continues to grow and gain popularity. Meant to educate people about the environment and natural assets of Union and Northumberland counties, Caring for Communities features activities every weekend throughout the month, culminating with the celebration festival at the Dale/Engle/Walker House.

The month began with a WKOK 1070 AM Roundtable discussion focusing on wetlands, coordinated by **Bob Deffner**, manager of R.B. Winter State Park. A talk by **Autumn Sabo**, a botanist with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), on the ecology of native plants, highlighted a presentation held in conjunction with the conservancy’s Native Plant Sale, a major fundraiser headed by **John Tonzetich**. On Earth Day, a new event this year had Bucknell biology professor **Matt McTammany** leading participants in sampling the water of Buffalo Creek at the Dale/Engle/Walker property and describing an overall program for doing that.

The main festival featured some of the usual anchor attractions such as **Clyde Peeling** and his reptiles, **David Blackbear Ramsey** describing the native American view of the natural environment, and **Greg Bonsall** leading youngsters in building bluebird houses. To add to the flavor, two musicians made their debut this year. **Lucy Henry** of Black Bear Crossing strummed the dulcimer and noted local musician **Van Wagner** sang songs about our area’s mining and lumbering history. Also new this year, Bucknell mathematics professor **Allen Schweinsberg** gave a talk on life in Montandon Marsh. On Arbor Day, the conservancy joined with the Lewisburg Shade Tree Commission for a walk around town that highlighted the challenges and successes in nurturing trees in an urban environment. The final weekend saw Canoe Susquehanna take boaters on a trip down Buffalo Creek from the Dale/Engle/Walker House to near the Susquehanna River. That and the water sampling of the creek were coordinated by the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance. Sprinkled throughout the month, walks on the Conservancy’s easement properties and bicycle rides coordinated by **Tom Gibson** on the country roads of Union County filled out the slate.

Wetlands Poster Contest Winners Announced and Their Work On Display

The winners of the Conservancy Wetlands Poster Contest are as follows: First Place and a \$50 prize goes to **Logan Stenger**; Second Place and a \$25 prize to **Megen Hendershot** of Mifflinburg; and Third Place and a \$25 prize to **Chloe Auman** of Linntown. Students from Linntown and Mifflinburg Intermediate Schools designed posters to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands locally and throughout the country. The artwork was on display at the Dale/Engle/Walker House during Caring for Communities month and throughout June and July. The posters are now at R. B. Winter State Park and will later be displayed in various libraries.

The winning posters were selected by members of the Linn Conservancy Education Committee and were judged on originality, artistic ability, and understanding of the subject matter. The poster below is the First Place winner. For the coming year it is hoped that the contest will be expanded to include area high schools. The theme for this coming year will be global warming. For more information call (570) 524-8666.



Poster Contest First Place Prize: Logan Stenger

2007 Native Plant Sale A Success

The native plant sale in April again proved to be a significant fundraiser for the Linn Conservancy. The total income was \$4,644, with costs of \$1,871 and a net profit of \$2,772. These funds will be used for general operating expenses. Many thanks go to sale coordinator **John Tonzetich** and to those who contributed to the sale in support of the Conservancy.

Restoring indigenous plants to our household gardens has struck the national consciousness and will ultimately benefit not only native flora but also the many insects and birds that are dependent on such species. Among the plants offered this year, color of foliage, flowers or fruit appears to have had the greatest appeal with blue flag iris, butterflyweed, and shooting stars being among the most popular perennials. The shrubs that were first choices included highbush blueberries, sassafras, grey dogwood and winterberry. We believe that offering native plants is a very appropriate way of meeting conservation goals and raising money for the Conservancy. Thanks to generous donations made by the Country Cupboard, Lewisburg Garden Club, Meixell-Diehl Agency, Milton Garden Club, Molesevich Environmental, Wal-mart and Wood-Mode, as well as Gretchen Walberg.

Educational Events

The Future of the Susquehanna River

A documentary film, "Hope for Polluted Waters", produced by WVIA will be shown at the Campus Theater on September 28, at 8pm. Admission is free.

On the following day, September 29, the Bucknell Environmental Center will be holding an all-day symposium from 8:30am to 5pm at the Langone Center on the Bucknell campus in Lewisburg, that will explore the mine drainage issue as it affects the Susquehanna River. The symposium will bring together speakers representing all aspects of this problem to review current mine drainage remediation efforts in eastern Pennsylvania, provide information on treatments, provide landowner and watershed group perspectives, and explore ways to enhance communication between these various constituents. For further information contact: Kim DiRocco 577-1421 or dirocco@bucknell.edu. Registration is \$10.

Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance (BCWA) Issues

.**Shannon Burkland**, Union County Conservation District (UCCD) watershed specialist, **Dan Wagner**, UCCD agricultural environmental specialist, and **Thom Fantaskey**, BCWA water quality monitoring coordinator, together with BCWA board members **Edwena Eger** and **Allan Grundstrom**, spoke about watershed environmental issues on the WKOK Roundtable program, "Boroughs to the Bay. . .and Beyond". The program was aired on the Sunbury Broadcasting Corp. radio stations, and can be heard at http://www.wkok.com/1070_WKOK/wkok_roundtable.htm

Trails Workshop

A *Greenways and Trails Workshop* was held at the Pennsylvania Power & Light (PPL) Montour Preserve on September 12. The workshop was sponsored by the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership. Topics included trail design and incorporating trails with their natural environment, for example, adjacent streams and conservation areas. Individuals and community groups that want to build hiking, biking, or pedestrian trails are invited to consult **Amy Davis** of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, tel. 570-524-4491, or e-mail adavis@seda-cog.org for materials on the workshop.

Support Pennsylvania's Energy Independence

As we go to press, Pennsylvania lawmakers are heading back to the State capital to address issues related to climate change and dependence on foreign oil during a legislative special session that begins September 17. They will be considering Pennsylvania's Energy Independence Strategy (EIS), a package of legislation developed by the Rendell Administration and a coalition of Republicans and Democrats. EIS addresses the following critical environmental issues:

The High Cost of Energy (House Bill 1201, Senate Bill 716): With EIS, the Rendell Administration is projecting to save \$10 billion over the next ten years through conservation and producing homegrown fuel to replace foreign oil. The bill will promote conservation through various measures: installing "smart meters" in homes to give consumers a better tool to reduce energy spending; by providing rebates to consumers who turn in their old, inefficient appliances (refrigerators and air conditioners) for newer more energy-efficient ones; and by providing vouchers that would cover 50% of the cost of installing solar panels in homes. Under the bill, electric utilities will have to prove they are undertaking bold measures to conserve energy, rather than building new generating plants. Without conservation, Pennsylvanians will have to spend \$10 billion over the next 15 years to build additional nuclear or coal-fired generating plants, resulting in increased pollution and higher electric bills.

Reducing Dependence on Foreign Oil (House Bill 1202, Senate Bill 789): Pennsylvania's strength is farm production. The Commonwealth is also a leader in the production of renewable fuels. One of the largest ethanol plants in the east will be built in Pennsylvania and an additional 340 million gallons of ethanol production are planned. By 2007, companies in the state are expected to produce 230 million gallons of biodiesel from processed coal, putting Pennsylvania's production near the top of all states. Through the PennSecurity Fuels Initiative, by 2017 fuel sellers in the state will be required to have at least 12.5 percent biofuel in every tank, and this is equivalent to our current imports from the Persian Gulf. By 2011, 25 percent of all Commonwealth vehicles will be hybrids.

Expanding Pennsylvania's Energy Production and Jobs (House Bill 1200, Senate Bill 716): A fund of over \$600 million will be developed by a slight increase in the electric bill (the average household would pay 45 cents a month) to increase Pennsylvania energy production and create employment of approximately 1,000 jobs. Consumers would be able to save about \$73 a year in lower electric costs and rebates. By 2020, 20% of all retail energy production in Pennsylvania is mandated to be from clean, efficient and advanced resources, including solar, wind, water and

biofuels production. Pennsylvania is the largest state purchaser of “green energy” in the United States, and is the largest state east of the Mississippi River in solar energy production.

We are urging everyone to contact their State Senator and Representative to support this important legislation. Since the colonial period, Pennsylvania has been a leader in farming and industry. Now we must work together to become a leader in state-produced clean energy and effective energy conservation. To see links to Pennsylvania state government go directly to www.state.pa.us.

Conservancy Supports Legislation to Limit Eminent Domain

The Federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 gave the U.S. Department of Energy the right to override the authority of the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission by using federal eminent domain in constructing power corridors through Pennsylvania to supply power to New York and New Jersey. Using this authority, the DOE announced this past spring its preliminary decision to create the Mid-Atlantic National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor (NIETC), a vast area which the DOE deems crucial to the nation’s electricity grid. Within this corridor the DOE, in concert with regional energy transmission company—PJM Interconnection—and various power companies, proposes construction of an energy super highway of massive transmission towers which would originate at Ohio Valley electric plants then cut through farms, national forests, protected conservation lands, historical sites, and other lands. Fifty of 67 Pennsylvania counties, including Northumberland, Union, Snyder, and Montour Counties, fall within the corridor.

To help fight DOE’s eminent domain authority, the Pennsylvania House of Representative passed House Resolution 297 which urges the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation to support legislation to repeal that section of the Federal Energy Policy Act which allowed eminent domain authority. The Linn Conservancy supported HR 297 in letters to House District 85 Representative **Russell Fairchild** and State Senator District 23 **Roger Madigan** stating, “The Linn Conservancy has taken this stand because we feel that the potential use of the power of eminent domain by Federal authorities for the creation of power lines through the State of Pennsylvania would be a direct threat to our stated purpose, which is to preserve and protect land with an ecological, recreational, historical or other value through the granting of land easements that continue that protection in perpetuity.”

The passage of HR 297 was a small victory in an ongoing battle that could have a devastating effect on Pennsylvania landowners, protected conservation lands and forestlands. We need your help in defeating this federal eminent domain clause in Congress.

Odds and Ends

The following are a number of environmental happenings that might be of interest:

- RB Winter State Park has monthly bulletins on hikes and events that anyone can access at: rbwintersp@state.pa.us
- Congratulations to **Shannon Burkland** on her Distinguished Service Award from the Conservation District for her work on White Deer Creek. The Union County Conservation District held its 50th anniversary this year, so it, too, is in line for praise. **Allan Grundstrom**, President of the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance said that Shannon’s work with Buffalo Creek also deserves significant recognition.
- **Dr. Duane Griffin** (dgriffin@bucknell.edu) is organizing his Bucknell classes to reduce the damage done by invasive species such as garlic mustard and autumn olive from Dale’s Ridge this fall.



Assessing Agricultural Runoff

BCWA is working with the UCCD on a project to assess agricultural runoff in impaired segments of the Buffalo Creek watershed. This past spring students of Bucknell University anthropology professor **Tom Greaves** conducted a survey of Buffalo Creek landowner attitudes toward watershed conservation. Their report provided good information for **Dan Wagner** who was hired by the UCCD in June as an agricultural environmental specialist. The Ag Specialist is working with farmers located in the Buffalo Creek watershed to identify and help implement management practices, such as planting riparian buffers or installing stream bank fencing that will reduce water pollution from agricultural runoff. Dan has been busy this summer mapping the area, identifying landowners and making first contacts. His work is supported by an EPA grant from the federal Clean Water Act § 319 grant program for which BCWA was a co-applicant with the UCCD.

Cleaning Up the Creek

Taking time out from a busy final exam period, five members of the Bucknell Environmental Club removed 84 stone and mud-filled tires from Buffalo Creek. The stream now runs freely and cleanly by the spot that had been obstructed by a long neglected tire dam. To make that happen, Bucknell students **Matt Lefurge**, **Saskia Madlene**, **Eric Lynch**, **Mark Turzynski**, and **Christine Kassab** cheerfully braved three feet of cold, fast-moving water for two hours on a Sunday in early May. The landowners gave permission for the removal of the tires, Buffalo Township provided a large dumpster and transfer of the tires to the landfill, and the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy paid the disposal fees. The result was a very successful joint project. BCWA is always interested in coordinating this kind of project; locations along Buffalo Creek in need of cleanup can be reported to buffalocreek@dejazzd.com.

Update on Acid Remediation Project

BCWA is seeking to remedy high acid conditions in the upper reaches of Buffalo Creek through installation of a passive water treatment system designed to reduce acid load and restore alkalinity to the stream. The design phase of the project was performed by Dietz et al. Consulting with funds from BCWA's first Growing Greener grant. In December 2006, BCWA was awarded a Growing Greener II grant from the Department of Environmental Protection in the amount of \$290,00 for the construction phase of the project. BCWA was also awarded a \$15,000 grant by the Union County Commissioners to help with the costs. Following approval of the Growing Greener II funds, BCWA moved ahead with this important stream restoration project and worked on resolving some final issues with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. These issues are nearly resolved, and BCWA is near a final agreement with the DCNR Bureau of Forestry concerning the timber at the site. The 2.8-acre site has been flagged by a surveyor, and BCWA is awaiting the Bureau of Forestry's evaluation of the timber located there. Construction of the passive water treatment basins on Buffalo Flats near the headwaters of the main stem of Buffalo Creek is scheduled to begin next spring.

Public Education Activities

BCWA sponsored a Canoe Float as part of Linn Conservancy's Caring for Communities celebration, which was a great success with ideal weather and creek conditions. There were 24 participants with three canoes and the rest kayaks. BCWA Board member, **Matt McTammany's** demonstration on water testing and fish sampling was enjoyed by a dozen or so attendees. His chart on volunteer monitoring activities and results was especially appreciated.

Union County Comprehensive Plan Upcoming Events

To ensure that Union County planners design future development to feature conservation of critical ecological zones, woodlands, waterways and farms, it is essential for Linn Conservancy members to engage in the upcoming County planning process. The purpose of this planning process will be to explain what a comprehensive plan is, what the planning process involves, what is at stake, the difference between the county and multi-municipal plans being developed, and why people should take an interest and become involved

Presentations will feature **Brian Auman**, RLA with the SEDA-COG Community Resource Center; **Neal Fogle**, Community Planning and Development Educator with Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Union County Planning Director **Shawn McLaughlin**. Presentations are designed to foster community dialogue on formulating a plan for the future. Information on the November forums, project website, and other ways to participate will be discussed. In addition presenters will share a variety of land-use planning concepts and alternatives that could possibly be part of Union County's future.

Presentations will be held:

September 26, 2007 at 7pm - Hartley Township Community Center in Laurelton; September 27, 2007 at 7pm - Mifflinburg High School Large Group Instruction Room in Mifflinburg--accessed from East Street; October 4, 2007 at 7pm - Union County Government Center in Lewisburg located at 155 N. 15th Street. Additionally, **WKOK's Radio Roundtable** program about the planning process will air on Sunday, October 8, 2007 and **WKOK Radio Leaders and Lawmakers** program at 11am on Thursday, November 8, 2007 will feature Union County Commissioners **Preston Boop** and **John Showers** discussing and answering questions about the comprehensive plan.

A series of three "**Public Outreach Forums**" will be held on Wednesday, November 14 and Thursday, November 15 throughout the county. **For further information:** contact **Shawn McLaughlin**, Planning Director, Union County Planning 570-524-3840, fax 570-524-3850. The County Plan website is: www.cultivatingcommunities.net

Dale/Engle/Walker Property Clean-Up Events Scheduled

The annual fall clean-up will be held this Saturday November 3 at the Dale/Engle/Walker House. Volunteers from the Conservancy and Bucknell University, as well as other interested volunteers, will gather to make the house and property shine. Tasks will include refilling potholes in the driveway, clearing brush and some wood to the back fields and the firewood pile, raking the lawn and trimming the overgrown brush along the side of the house.

Members Help Linn Conservancy Meet Its Goals through Gifts and Time

Gifts and Donations: by **Walter, Patricia and Darinda Fisher** in Memory of **William Mahalsky**; and **Robert M. Linn** in Memory of **Henrietta Linn**

Increased Level of Giving: by **Gladys Justis** and **Eric and Carolyn Hathaway**

Welcome to New Members: **John and Nancy Libbey, Jeff and Angela Trop, Merrill Linn, Ben Hoskins and Carol Coldren.**

Thanks to: Ruth Burnham for chairing the **annual dinner committee**, providing exceptional organization and table decorations.

The Merrill W. Linn
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