

Linn Log

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

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Bulletin:

Linn Conservancy to Buy Tract in Montandon Marsh

A major objective of the Linn Conservancy is about to be met! On July 2, 1997 the Conservancy signed an agreement to purchase the 33 acre Belles property in Montandon located north of Route 45 in the northern extreme of undeveloped wetlands. With closure of this sale set for October 1, 1997 our first land protection through outright purchase will be achieved. For the tract itself, we have agreed on a price of \$20,000. In addition, lawyers' fees and survey and closing costs will be approximately \$3,500. This presents a financial challenge which we have already begun to address. Thanks to Conservancy past-president Kate Hastings, who prepared a grant proposal in anticipation of this day, the Conservancy has been awarded a Key '93 grant. This grant will reimburse us for 50% of our purchase. Plans are to raise funds initially through direct solicitation of past and present board members and of the general membership. Other fund-raising activities will be designed to involve the public at large. An appeal to board members has already been made.

At this propitious time, let's undertake a brief review of the unique upland and wetland environments in the Montandon Area and their importance. Interest in this site dates to early part of the 20th Century when scientists and students affiliated with Bucknell began to study the area's geology, ground water, vegetation, and birds. Scientific efforts to understand the natural history of the site intensified about 10 years ago when it became clear that sand and gravel mining would impact the southern portions of the region. These field studies, to identify the most significant areas, have shown that privately owned tracts north of Route 45 and Montandon contain some of the best examples of upland dunes and wet forest. We now have an opportunity to protect, in perpetuity, a keystone piece of the Montandon ecosystem. This tract is unique in being one of the few parcels that contains the range of special Montandon habitats. The acquisition and full protection of this keystone tract will help facilitate conservation on adjacent privately held tracts for generations to come. Other important portions of Montandon habitat are privately held, multi-generation lands which will be only rarely available for ownership transfer.

The available tract is located within the broad Susquehanna River floodplain composed of sands and gravels associated with glaciation. Its vegetation contains elements of two geographically different communities, glaciated wetlands and ocean coastal plain, and contains at least two rare plant species. Vegetation associations include shrub marsh, sedge marsh, hardwood swamp, as well as moist and dry upland hardwoods. A year-round flowing stream that winds through the property carries most of the surface water north of Route 45. Geologically, the tract contains sand dunes interspersed with wetlands. These dunes were formed by winds lifting Ice Age outwash during low flow periods from the Susquehanna's river bed. Low gradients on sands combine with a near-surface but fluctuating water table to produce broad zones of inconstant hydrology. The result is a biological association that most closely resembles an ocean coastal plain or back-dune community both in structure and species. This unusual vegetation has persisted as relicts after plant populations were isolated during interglacial climate warming.

The unique nature of the Montandon area's biology is well known to Pennsylvania naturalists and conservationists and references to its natural history appear in floral, faunal, and geomorphological listings. For example, breeding-bird surveys have recorded 70 bird species nesting in the complex, including the state-endangered least bittern and marsh wren. A 1984 study by The Nature Conservancy reported a total of 148 species of shorebirds, raptors, and land birds seen in the Marsh. Each autumn and spring sees heavy use of the wetlands by migrating waterfowl. The sandy but wet soils make the Montandon area Pennsylvania's premier site for the unusual spadefoot toad.

The biodiversity of the tract and region belies a history of intensive activity -- plowing, timbering, mining, and draining. The available tract was not immune. However, apart from past woodcutting and four acres of old fields reverting from cultivation, the tract's hydrology and vegetation are in remarkably good condition.

Preservation of this tract today will mean protection forever. Because the tract is very near the source of waters flowing through the region, it is one of the least vulnerable to the effects of drainage or chemical use. Housing development is restricted to the eastern edge and a single-track railroad bounds the west. Future development on areas adjacent to the tract is unlikely due to wetlands and zoning restrictions. Consequently the Conservancy will be able to protect the wonderful natural beauty of this tract into the future.

Coming Events:

Children's Photography Workshop in Montandon Marsh

on Sunday, September 21st 1:30-3 p.m.

John Gardner, photographer and owner of the Lewisburg Studio, and John Clark, naturalist, will be conducting a photography workshop in the Montandon Marsh for ten young people in fourth through seventh grade. Participants need to register with the office of the Linn Conservancy by Friday, September 12th by sending in a non-refundable \$5 along with name, age, address and phone # of the registrant. Space is limited so those interested should register as soon as possible.

Each registrant needs to bring his/her own loaded camera and a note pad for recording information about the plants he/she will be photographing. The group will assemble at the parking lot of DJ's Drive-In, formerly May's Landing. Coming from Lewisburg, the restaurant is on the right (south) corner of the Montandon side of the Rt. 45 Susquehanna River Bridge. We will then go by van to the marsh. In case of rain, the event will be held the following Sunday, September 28. Registrants should wear appropriate shoes and jeans.

Montandon Marsh Walk

on Sunday, September 28st 1:30 p.m.

Join Allen Schweinsberg as he leads an informative and enjoyable walk at Montandon Marsh on Sunday, September 28. We'll meet at the Bucknell stadium parking lot at 1:30. After the short drive to the marsh, we'll head out for an approximately two hour walk. Come and experience firsthand this very significant natural environment.

October 19th Walk at Mohn Mill Ponds and Dinner at Sand Run Lodge

Sunday at Sand Run Lodge for Linn Conservancy members, their families, and guests. Come at any time after noon and join us at two o'clock for a one-mile (easy) walk by the Mohn Mill vernal ponds with naturalist John Clark, followed by a family-style evening meal at 5:30 at the former home of the Zimmerman family, later owned by Judge Albert Johnson. This is the northwesternmost spot in Union County. It is a quiet and beautiful location next to one of the County's most important natural areas where Merrill Linn spent much time. One can also stay overnight in rural simplicity and take breakfast before heading off for the real world on Monday morning!

Choose the option best for you and send your check and the enclosed reservation form to P.O. Box 501, Lewisburg. Accommodations are limited to 35 for meals and 16 for overnight. Reservations are held on a first-paid basis and will close by October 12th. Directions to Sand Run -- which is about 45 minutes from Lewisburg -- and other details will be sent to those who register.

Final 1997 ADOPT-A-ROAD Cleanup on Sunday, October 26, at 1 P.M.

Volunteers interested in cleaning our Adopt-a-Road segment, which runs along Penns Creek, should meet at the Limestone Township pavilion. To reach the pavilion go south on Route 104 (on the west side of Mifflinburg); after a couple of miles, and just before you would cross the bridge over Penns Creek, turn right onto SR#3012 and proceed west a mile to the pavilion. Come earlier and bring a picnic lunch -- and a friend. Ed Culver, Tom and Lindsay Beck, Kim Daubman, and Pete and Allen Macky have helped Geoff Goodenow this year on other adopt-a-road afternoons. Call Geoff at 523-0257 if interested in helping.

Montandon Marsh Slide Lecture on Thursday, November 6th , 7:30 P.M.

We will have an opportunity to learn more about Montandon Marsh when Warren Abrahamson, biology professor at Bucknell and long-time preservation advocate of this very special habitat, presents a slide-illustrated lecture on November 6 at 7:30 P.M. Abe, along with other Bucknell professors Allen Schweinsberg and Craig Kochel as well as John Clark, has come to know well the birds, amphibians, and plants that make up this ecosystem just four miles south of Milton and one mile east of Lewisburg.

Abe's talk will be held in the Montandon Elementary School auditorium and everyone is invited. Refreshments will be served following the presentation.

Our Environment Matters:

Conservancy Supports Monitoring of Penns Creek Water Quality

A check for \$500 was sent in May by the Linn Conservancy to the Penns Valley Conservation Association to support the PVCA's monitoring of water quality in Pine, Elk, and Penns creeks. We have been concerned for the success of PVCA's effort and have given it moral support for several years. As Linn board member Neal Woodruff wrote, "We too want to see the native fisheries remain undisturbed and the natural stretches of those creeks kept as they are. We are persuaded, with your legal counsel, that your entering into the unique agreement proposed by the DEP, with the added conditions you held out for, offers the best opportunity now to preserve the creeks." Our financial gift is earmarked for the monitoring of Penns Creek which is an exceptional value stream in the area near new mining by Con-Stone, Inc. For those members who want to help with additional financial support, checks may be sent directly to PVCA, PO Box 96, Spring Mills, PA 16875 and you will receive their updates directly.

Conservancy Gets Sheary Grant to Support Environmental Education at R.B.Winter's Halfway Run Learning Center

An Edna M. Sheary grant of \$31,698 was recently awarded to the Linn Conservancy to improve environmental educational resources at the Halfway Run Environmental Learning Center located in R. B. Winter State Park. These funds will go to support construction of a new handicapped-accessible outdoor presentation area and to purchase cassette tapes, nature oriented games, puzzles and models as well as three computer work stations and carefully selected software. This is the third Sheary grant received by the Conservancy since 1993, and the second in support of educational resources at the park.

The Learning Center is considered by the our Board of Directors to be an important environmental education program for area young people, their families and friends, and indeed all visitors to the park. Linn Conservancy and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources joined in support of the Center and this innovative partnership between private and public sectors stands as an example of how an organization of knowledgeable volunteers together with professional staff of a state park can work efficiently to make progress in meeting conservation objectives.

The grant proposal was written by Conservancy coordinator Jeannette Lasansky and two park officials. Kate Hastings, Conservancy board member, wrote and presented the successful application as she did on the two earlier projects.

Construction of the outdoor presentation area has already begun.

Website on Local Plants Available

Linn Conservancy members may enjoy visiting a website Warren Abrahamson created with Bucknell computer center staff at <<http://www.bucknell.edu/~abrahmsn/bi330/>>. This will connect you to the home page for his autumn-taught Plant Systematics course, which allows users to view approximately 500 photographic images organized by order, family, genus, or place (i.e., Montandon Marsh, Dale's Ridge, Shamokin Mountain, Jones Mountain, Bucknell Natural Area, Bucknell Greenhouse, Longwood Gardens). The page also links to plant species lists, keys to trees of the Lewisburg area, and more. It includes a quiz feature where users can test their knowledge.

Preserving Family Land Book Now Available

Linn Conservancy is making an important land preservation manual available to the public at cost. *Preserving Family Lands: Book II* by attorney and nationally-known conservation specialist Stephen J. Small has just been released. It presents more sophisticated tax planning techniques and concepts for preserving land than his widely praised earlier book issued in 1988. Available at the Union County Historical Society office, the book may also be requested through the mail. *Preserving Family Lands: Book II* sells for \$8 plus tax and, when mailed, a \$2 shipping fee. Checks should be made out to Linn Conservancy.

Making Tracks by Neal Woodruff

I have sometimes wondered what questions I could dredge up to ask would-be township supervisors or borough council members at a candidates' night. Recent events have yielded illumination: I would ask about the administration of zoning regulations.

What qualifications would a candidate for office insist on in choosing a municipal zoning officer? What knowledge should such an officer possess? What training and on-going support would be made available to foster an officer's effectiveness in administering a zoning ordinance? What qualifications, knowledge, and training would be desirable in citizen appointees to a municipal zoning hearing board? These are the questions I would ask.

Many people, I suspect, know little or nothing about what such officers do or why they are important - especially important in a locale under development pressure, as Union County is now.

Planning to keep like activities or functions together in districts or zones so that they do not interfere with each other - which is what zoning does - is authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. That is the law establishing methods of regulating land use throughout the commonwealth. The MPC, as it is called, suggests what land-use controls are appropriately included in municipal ordinances and prescribes the ways in which those ordinances are to be fairly enforced. Zoning may reach well beyond establishing neighborhoods for residences, farms, and factories. It may closely regulate the nature of these neighborhoods and may deal also with occupied and unoccupied areas, with "density of population and intensity of use," and with "protection and preservation of natural resources [including water supply] and agricultural land and activities." That is, zoning may have a crucial impact on the nature and quality of life of a locale.

In principle, a highly reasonable and desirable expedient to buttress the common good, zoning runs into some problems in the execution. The crazy-quilt nature of Pennsylvania's division into municipalities is at the heart of many of them. For one, regional zoning is difficult or impossible to achieve because different municipalities willfully and not surprisingly go each their own way. A county may have land use regulations, as Union County does, but when one of the constituent municipalities enacts a zoning ordinance, it supersedes the county regulations.

The same division into municipalities seems to occasion variance and inconsistency in and enforcement of zoning regulations. The means of enforcement is established by the MPC, which mandates appointment of a zoning officer who "shall meet qualifications established by the municipality and shall be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of municipal zoning." But the qualifications and the working knowledge do vary from one municipality to another, sometimes yielding a tightly competent enforcement, sometimes a looser permissiveness. The will to enforce is variable. Oversight by citizens seems relaxed unless and until someone's ox is gored.

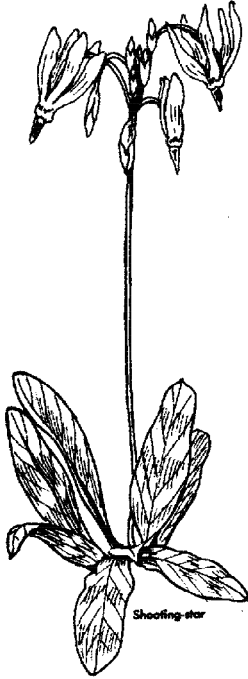
Assurance of fairness through a right of appeal of zoning decisions is also prescribed by the MPC. A zoning hearing board made up of residents is established in each municipality. Its function is to hear and adjudicate appeals of decisions taken by the hearing officer. There are no special qualifications for service on such a board, the apparent assumption (probably quite correct) being that they will function as "good men and true." In my experience, they have rather seldom been called into action in Union County. But I would have them well prepared.

I think it is clear that sound zoning ordinances and firm, knowing enforcement have great importance for Union County, especially just now. The continuance of our excellent quality of life may be strongly dependent upon them. The increase of population to 40,000, expected by 2000, has already occurred in the mid-1990's, according to the county Planning Department. People in other counties where economies have suffered more than ours have discovered that good roads make our attractive locale readily accessible. The prospective business park in Gregg Township may in time bring more newcomers. Changes in the agricultural economy exert new pressures on farmers. Developers are seeing needs and demands to satisfy. All this change requires steering, not drift, if we are to conserve and retain what we want to keep of what we have, and if what comes newly is to have similar high quality.

Hence the questions I would ask candidates for municipal office. Zoning is, I believe, an essential means of steering, not drifting, toward what the future holds. And the wheel needs to be in capable hands. Recently that has not seemed uniformly the case. But appointments of zoning officers and to hearing boards may be influenced by citizens' voices, and it is important that they be heard, insisting firmly on competence.

Joint Stewardship Program is Under Way on Significant Sites

We are reminded of the advice of Wildlands Trust land protection specialist Dennis Collins who said not to measure one's achievements by simply totaling acreage under easement, or purchased, but by establishing sound relationships on quality sites. With this in mind we are proud to announce that, in addition to the Wild Lupine joint stewardship, we are proceeding to establish similar relationships on two other sites. These are also privately owned lands that the state field office of the Nature Conservancy has identified as deserving special protection because of the plants or animals there.



One of the sites involves the shooting star (*Dodecatheon amethystinum*) which we are seeking to protect in Union Township, Union County. You might mistake this flower for a Cyclamen to which it is very closely related. The delicate back-folded petals of pink and protruding black stamens tipped with yellow create such an intriguing appearance that it is often a frontispiece on rare plant publications. John Clark recently saw it on an Alaskan rare plant poster in the Scripps Museum in San Diego. Obviously then, the shooting star's rarity doesn't come from geographic restriction; it occurs sporadically from Pennsylvania to Alaska along a belt that roughly defines the extent of the last glaciation. It is uncommon because it appears only on a very specific habitat of vertical shale seeps that are somewhat alkaline and only wet during the spring. This sort of habitat typically covers only a small area so the plant populations are equally small, usually consisting of 50 to sometimes a couple of hundred plants in a good year. Seasonal seeps that are sufficiently dependable year in and year out to perpetuate the plant may also play a part in its rarity since individual plants are perennial but short lived.

Another possible reason for restricted appearance is the seed which is smooth and round, looking very much like a mustard seed. The design doesn't seem well suited for long distance travel to new sites or to catch in the crannies it occupies on the rock face. It is protected from development pressures by its inaccessibility on cliff faces but is vulnerable if a well is drilled above which interrupts the water supply.

The Coordinator's Perspective by Jeannette Lasansky

Receiving the new and revised Linn Conservancy membership brochure (enclosed) has given me cause to reflect on what an exciting moment this is for the Conservancy in terms of its accomplishments and future growth.

A year ago the Conservancy was stunned by the early death of board member Marge Falso and frustrated by some projects that always seemed "about to" happen. Now, a year later, this brochure is made available again by contributions in Marge's memory and the Conservancy is raising money for its first fee-simple acquisition -- a substantial and important portion of the Montandon Marsh.

Those who joined the Conservancy and supported it during its formative years can fully appreciate how the concept of identifying, caring for, and preserving special lands has translated into the accomplishments listed in the brochure. New members are providing a source of energy, resources, and fresh perspectives to bolster those who have been working toward these objectives, some for as long as ten years. This is a winning combination.

Just as we have seen the national group of which the Linn Conservancy is a sponsor -- The Land Trust Alliance -- mature and become a better umbrella organization, so we witness the Pennsylvania Land Trust Alliance (PALTA), and its members such as the Linn Conservancy mature. It is a particularly exciting time to be part of the land trust/conservancy movement.

Each individual, family, business, or organization participating on this grass-roots level is a very important component in the task of keeping our environment special.

People Effect Change:

New Members Help Linn Conservancy Grow and Meet Its Goals

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Conservancy since the spring's *Linn Log*:

Cynthia Hogue, Elizabeth Schott, Xana & Larry Winans, Diane & Clyde Peeling, Bill & Debbie Torok, Donald H. Bowman, William D. Adams & Catherine Bruce, Jere W. Motto, John J. & Evelyn B. Petery, Joseph Andracchio, Audrey & Arthur Borden, Andy & Carol Dilatush, Leslie Sheary, David & Doris Reed, Karen & Elaine Zenzinger, Thomas & Harriet Bresnhan, William & Marilyn Davidson, Charles & Karin Knisely, Andy

Mack & Debra Wright, Norman Ulmer, Richard Lakey, Arlene Groninger, Rose Ann Koons, John C. Snook, and the R.B. Winter State Park.

Some of our new members have joined in supporting the Linn Conservancy after being invited by a current member while others have picked up a membership envelope or brochure at one of our trails or at one of our new and attractive racks at the following businesses: Dogwood Hill, Donehower's Sporting Goods, the Bookseller, Campus Cycle and Flyfishing Center, Second Nature, the Natural Food Store, Maya Bookstore and Cafe, and Cafe Latte in Lewisburg, the West Milton Bank in West Milton, the Mifflinburg Farm Supply, Mary Koons, Carriage Corner in Mifflinburg, and Buoy's Store in Laurelton. We thank these businesses for helping us spread the word and educate new people about our area's natural resources. Members needing brochures should stop by any of these businesses or at the office of the Union County Historical Society where we are located in the Union County Courthouse. Enjoy!

Trail Reports by Warren Abrahamson, Joe Southerton, and Allan Quant

Many hikers and others enjoy the varied nature trails maintained by Linn Conservancy. However, trail upkeep does take considerable effort. To assist in this work, and as reported in the winter *Linn Log*, the Conservancy inaugurated a monthly adopt-a-trail program in 1997 by families and larger groups. In this issue we spotlight recent and ongoing maintenance efforts at three of our trails. These illustrate the behind-the-scenes efforts needed to make traversing a nature trail a pleasant and safe experience.

Shamokin Mountain Trail: Spring and early summer has seen considerable mowing and pruning. Buddy Strawser, as in previous years, mowed the field portion of the trail with his tractor and mower. Jill, Chris, and Warren Abrahamson as well as Wayne McDiffet have pruned blackberries and multiflora rose overgrowing the trail in wooded sections. Because of the slopes on the Shamokin Mountain Trail, erosion has become a problem in several areas. Plans are underway to involve a local boy scout in the construction of a number of earthen water diversions to reduce trail erosion. He will perform the work as a project for his eagle scout badge.

Koons Trail: People are eager to help if just given the opportunity. Joe Southerton found this out when he visited the Mifflinburg neighborhood next to the Koons trail seeking volunteers for the adopt-a-trail program. Going door-to-door to the houses nearest the trail, he received positive responses from all he met. Volunteers for 1997 are: April - the Huntington family, July - the Prah family, June - the Hobart family, August - the Keiffer family, and September - the Fahrman family. Joe reports that an excellent job is being done with the mowing, clipping, and pruning needed.

Dale's Ridge Trail: Allan Quant made arrangements for stone to be added to the road and to replace the overflow pipe from the Walker pond. Work should be completed by the time you read this. Allan and Geoff Goodenow conducted the annual conservation easement inventory including the taking of photographs at designated locations. Quentin Feitner mowed the upper old field during the early summer since this field was not mowed during the previous autumn. Annual mowing limits the invasion of woody shrubs and trees.

For the months of March, April, and May several dozen young people under the leadership of Bob and Sue Rapp were cleaning, maintaining and monitoring this trail in Buffalo Township, which begins along Strawbridge Road beside Buffalo Creek. Boy Scout Troop #538 and Lewisburg High School students from the American History class were the first trail steward volunteers. In the spring *Linn Log* we identified the Boy Scouts involved and herewith list the high school students who worked under the guidance of teacher Sue Rapp: Lucy Pino, Tamara Lewis, Abrana Watts, Nate Inkrote, John Romany, Nate Michael, Lindy Bacon, Lindsay Bryant, Mariah Quant, Matt Gain, Christie McDiffett, Caitlin Stechschutte, Laurie Evans, Jennifer Rautzahn, Matthew Nemeth, Lauren Robinson, Marisa North, Hannah Daniels, and Christien Eveleth. All trail stewards were presented the new Linn decal as a thank you from the Conservancy.

For the two months running from mid-June to mid-August, girl scouts under the supervision of Nancy Libbey maintained the trail. As of Mid-July, Lewisburg Cadette Troup 1097 members Pamela and Allison Libbey, Michele Donegan, and her mother Phyllis had participated along with volunteer Kim Daubman who is not associated with the troop. Additional scouts to be given the opportunity included Brianna Bingaman, Lyndsey Braidic, and Aurora Delgado-Poust. In addition to clipping, work has included freshening the blazes (blue marks) on trees along the trail and repainting fences and signs in the parking area.

The Conservancy is looking for additional sponsors. The project is ideal for groups such as those that the Rapps and Nancy Libbey have led. For more information on sponsoring a month call the Conservancy at 524-8666.

Buffalo Creek Cleanup a Success

Volunteers from the Bucknell Outing Club and Bucknell's service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega gathered at Dale's Ridge on April 26 to board canoes for an afternoon of trash pickup along Buffalo Creek and the Susquehanna River down to St. George St. The result of this Conservancy sponsored event was seven canoe-loads of trash that included numerous tires and other large pieces. Although the mission was cleanup, the students also found themselves enjoying the beauty of wildflowers lining the banks such as bluebells and trout lilies and seeking recall from science courses to identify aquatic invertebrate larvae and other life forms encountered along the way. The cleanup was organized by Allan and Betsy Quant of Canoe Susquehanna. Thanks to all who participated and to Bucknell's Jim Hostetler who coordinated the Outing Club's involvement and arranged for a large portion of the trash to be disposed of in a Bucknell dumpster.

Sue Travis is New Board Member and Treasurer; Betsy Quant the Linn President-Elect John C. Snook and Bruce H. Moyer are New Board Members

New treasurer Sue Travis, a resident of Union County since 1970, has served in administrative positions with the Union/Snyder Area Agency on Aging, Union/Snyder Office of Human Resources, and Family Planning Services for Union/Snyder/Northumberland. For the latter two agencies she served as executive director and coordinated fiscal and personnel management. Each organization operated on an \$800,000 budget. A native on Long Island, New York, and a graduate of Syracuse University, Sue has been a member of Linn Conservancy since 1989.

President-elect Betsy Quant is a 1974 graduate of Bucknell who majored in geology. She and her husband, Allan, manage Canoe Susquehanna, which runs canoe trips throughout the Eastern United States and Canada. Betsy is also affiliated with the National Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, the American Canoe Association, Central Susquehanna Hostellers, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and White Deer Search and Rescue as a member of its mountain bike team and as a dog handler. Betsy joined the Conservancy's board this year and chairs its public awareness committee. She has a particular interest in greenway projects and has also organized two major cleanup efforts in Buffalo Creek near Dale's Ridge. Betsy was recently appointed by Governor Ridge to the Citizens' Advisory Board for the Chesapeake Bay Alliance Executive Committee.

A second new board member is John C. Snook. He is a resident of Limestone Township who works part-time at the Mifflinburg Farm Supply in parts and service. He also works a 250-acre farming operation. A graduate of Mifflinburg High School and Penn State University where he earned a B.S. in agricultural business management, John is a multi-generational Union Countian who manages the farms owned by his grandmother, Margaret Seebold, one of which is the site of the Wild Lupine, now protected in a voluntary stewardship arrangement. John lives with his wife and two children in Limestone Township. He has also been active in the past, along with his father, in the West Shore Railroad. John has been attending the site and stewardship as well as public awareness committee meetings.

Bruce H. Moyer, who lives near Dice in Limestone Township, is our third new director. He brings to the Conservancy a lifetime of work on community issues and in education. A native of Lebanon County and initially a teacher at the Milton Hershey School, Bruce also worked for a decade with the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association before coming to the Union County area with the Cooperative Extension Service of Penn State University. Most recently he served on the review committee of the new Union County Comprehensive Plan. As one who has sat on numerous state boards, worked with farmland acquisition and preservation issues, and in school systems, Bruce will bring valuable expertise to the Conservancy as it deals with land preservation issues in Union and upper Northumberland counties. Bruce describes himself as "a team player who likes to get things done." He says he has always felt that giving back to the community is a very important component to life. We welcome Bruce aboard and look forward to working with him. He has been newly appointed to the our public awareness committee as has Mifflinburg resident Rose Ann Koons who is also a past educator.

Richard Nickelsen, Joseph Priestly Unitarian Fellowship Honored at Annual Dinner Appreciation Extended to Margaret Seebold

Moderate temperature, crystal-clear air and plenty of sunshine contributed to a most agreeable late-afternoon drive through the central Pennsylvania countryside to the United Christ Lutheran Church, commonly known as "Four Bells," for our 10th annual dinner. After a delicious meal, the Conservancy presented awards to a member and a non-member for outstanding environmental service. Awards will now be given annually. The first recipients were Richard "Dick" Nickelsen and the Joseph Priestly Unitarian Fellowship.

Dick received a standing ovation after being cited by Warren Abrahamson for meritorious service to the Conservancy and for his efforts to preserve the natural landscape of central Pennsylvania. He was one of the nine founding Board members of Linn Conservancy in 1988 and retired from the Board only recently. The Walker Farm conservation easement on Dale's Ridge benefited from his expertise and the Dale's Ridge Trail is a reality because of his efforts. Not only did Dick lay out the trail and direct its construction, but he has also served as chief steward since

its creation in 1990. Many have been enriched by his insights provided on the numerous educational walks he has led on the trail. Dick's conservation efforts extend well beyond the Linn Conservancy. He has served the Union County Conservation District as a board member for over two decades, and has assisted the Seven Mountains Audubon Society in many ways since the Chapter's founding in the early 1970s, as a board member, field trip leader and coordinator, program chair, and chair of annual Christmas bird count.

John Clark presented a framed photograph taken of member and past director Mark Holman, along the Merrill Linn trail amid a stand of ferns at Mohn Mill, to Priestly Fellowship and Linn Conservancy member, Judy Peeler. She initiated the group's involvement with the Linn trail shortly after it was planned and blazed by member Richard Brown. As John noted, for over six years volunteers from the Joseph Priestly Unitarian Fellowship have devoted personal time and resources, with energy and enthusiasm, to maintain this trail for public convenience. It was the first group to assume total responsibility for a Conservancy site and continues to be the model to which others aspire. The need for recognition and protection of the very special features of the Mohn Mill area was noted by ecologists of The Nature Conservancy and by Merrill Linn many years ago. The area contains a medley of small glacial ponds and these wetlands hold a spectacular concentration of plants and animals, some of national significance. Local organizations such as Linn Conservancy, working in conjunction with area citizenry such as the Joseph Priestly Unitarian Fellowship, make this recognition and protection happen. The dependable labors of the Priestly Fellowship, like this secluded trail itself, have not yet received widespread notice. The group's quiet efficiency does have, however, the abiding appreciation of the officers and committee members of the Conservancy.

Also recognized was land owner Margaret Seebold of Limestone Township for support of Linn Conservancy objectives resulting in our first joint stewardship of a site identified on the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory for Union County. This initiative to protect the early blooming Wild Lupine was discussed in the Winter 1997 *Linn Log*. Attending the dinner with Mrs. Seebold were daughter Ruth-Alice Seebold Spangler and grandson John C. Snook. Conservancy coordinator Jeannette Lasansky presented a framed and matted print of the Wild Lupine to Mrs. Seebold.

Briefs:

Thanks to those who made the annual dinner a success: Chris and Kate Snyder at the Natural Foods Store for the table plants which were presented to Betty and Gil Black, Cindy Nickelsen, John Snook and Ruth-Alice Spangler; June Hoyle and Betsy Quant for supplying the social hour beverages and munchies; Margaret Mathias and Elva Reitz for folding Koons Trail brochures, and to volunteers of the church for being wonderful cooks and hosts.

Thanks to John Gardner, John Clark, John Tonzetich, and Joe Southerton for offering educational sojourns for wildflower, photography, and bird enthusiasts in the spring. John Clark and John Gardner went out in mid-May to the lupine site and photographed the plant while it was at the height of its bloom.

Thanks to those who braved a cold Lewisburg Festival of the Arts to promote the Linn Conservancy: Rob Cook, who chaired the effort and made a new stand to hold our Linn Banner above the crowd for all to see, and volunteers Kate Hastings, Michael Pereira, Mary Ellen Jansen, Roger Curran, and Sue Travis who, along with Rob, talked up Conservancy issues to those who would listen and tried to sell cold fruit spritzers on a very cold day. Donations were made to the Conservancy including one from Mary Pat Olley of Havertown, Pennsylvania. Jill Reynolds arranged for a window display that weekend at the Gingerbread House.

Thanks to attorneys Bill Belford and Terry Light for helping with the recently executed agreement of sale for the Belles Property. Belford provided a certification of title pro bono and Terry Light reviewed the legal documents for us.

Thanks to charter member, Elva Reitz, for a recent and significant gift; also to Bucknell environmental students who raised funds for the Linn Conservancy at their Earth Day celebration.

Thanks to Thom Rippon for his work to clear the Wild Lupine site.

Have a good fall and when you visit the Koons Trail located by the Hassenplug covered bridge in Mifflinburg, be sure to pick up a copy of the new trail brochure. It was researched and written by Joe Southerton and the map is courtesy of John Clark. Copies are also available in the Conservancy office and will be sent out with an upcoming *Linn Log*. Be sure to place our new decal on a spot where others will see it and ask, "What is the Linn Conservancy?" YOU will be able to tell them! The decal looks good on car bumpers, rear windows, and doors. Also enclosed is the new and revised general membership brochure, mentioned above by Jeannette. Initially conceived by Susan Warner-Mills and Jim Mathias, it is a popular, informative item that quickly moves from our trail kiosks and brochure racks into the hands of interested people.