

Linn Log

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

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Spring 1997

Coming Events:

Buffalo Creek Cleanup with the Quants on Saturday, April 26th at 1 p.m.

There will be a day of canoeing and litter pickup on April 26th in anticipation of National River Cleanup Week in May. Allan and Betsy Quant of Canoe Susquehanna will provide on-the-water safety instruction and the canoes. The route will include the section of Buffalo Creek from Dale's Ridge to the St. Anthony Street. Volunteers are needed for both land and water tasks. Join the Linn Conservancy in stewardship of our local waterways. Please call Betsy Quant at 524-7692 or the office at 524-8666 to let her know of your interest in participating.

Children's Photography Workshop on Sunday, April 27th from 1:30-3 p.m.

John Gardner, photographer and owner of the Lewisburg Studio, and John Clark, botanist, will be conducting a photography workshop on wildflowers at the Dale's Ridge Trail for ten young people in fourth through seventh grade. Participants need to register with the office of the Linn Conservancy by Thursday, April 24th 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 Dales' Ridge Trail parking lot by 1:30 on the 27th. In case of rain, the event will be held the following Sunday. Registrants should wear appropriate shoes and jeans.

Dale's Ridge Wild Flower Walk on Sunday, May 4th at 1:30 p.m.

Bucknell biologist and Linn member, John Tonzetich, will conduct a wildflower walk on the flood plain of Dale's Ridge Trail on Sunday May 4th. Those wanting to participate should assemble at the trail's parking area by 1:30 pm. Participants are advised to wear appropriate walking shoes. Bring binoculars if you want to spot birds as well. There is no rain date on this event

"Biodiversity: It Makes a World of Difference" by Bob Hill at the 10th Annual Dinner of the Linn Conservancy 6:00 pm Wednesday, May 7th at the Four Bell Church, west of Mifflinburg

A registration form is enclosed for the annual dinner to be held this year at Four Bell Church which is very well known for its family-style meals. The church is located on the south side of Rte 45 about three miles west of Mifflinburg. Parking for the dining area is in the rear of the modern church building with its four bell tower. This country ham and all the fixings meal will delight one's palette as our speaker will stimulate our minds. Don't miss it. Bring a friend or two. Social time will begin at 6 pm while the meal itself will begin at 6:30. Registration forms and checks for \$10 per person need to be

Have you every taken an aspirin?...eaten a corn chip?...enjoyed a favorite dish that consists of blueberries, walnuts, maple syrup, sunflower oil, wild rice, beans, and squash, to name only a few?...relaxed near a waterfall?...observed "watchable wildlife" such as migrating geese or wild elk? If so, you are already aware of the benefits of conserving our biological diversity--that wild magic of life--nature in the balance.

Yet, 13% of the "diverse sorts" of plants and animals that William Penn observed in his "Woods" in the late 1600s are either gone from the Commonwealth or are on the verge of being lost. Why have we been so careless? You will learn about: the threats to our intricate web of life; the positions of antagonistic social movements that are engaged in conflict to either impoverish or improve biodiversity; and what you, too can do to conserve our native species.

Our evening's speaker, Bob Hill, is currently the Biodiversity Coordinator for Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. He has held the position of State Botanist as well as Wetland Specialist and was responsible for the state's wetland education and technical training program. Mr. Hill also was the Assistant to the deputy secretaries for both Water Resource Management and Public Outreach in the Department of Environmental Protection. He is receiving his doctorate in Environmental Adult Education and Community Development in June from Penn State University, College of Education. Bob Hill has a BS in Biology (Millersville University), and two Masters Degrees from the University of Wyoming (Botany and Ecology) and State University of NY (Environmental Ethics). Bob Hill has taught at Penn State University, York College and Harrisburg Area Community College.

A brief business meeting will precede the talk at which there will be new election of officers. Being nominated are: Geoff Goodenow for President, Betsy Quant for President-Elect, and Wayne McDiffett for Secretary. Gil Black will remain on the Board as Treasurer but plans be working with a new Treasurer (see article later on in *Linn Log*). Also awards will be given to persons both within the Conservancy and outside the membership for outstanding conservation efforts in our territory of Union and upper Northumberland County.

Koons' Trail Birding Walk on Sunday, May 25 at 3 p.m.

Joe Southerton, a member of Linn's Site and Stewardship Committee and the Chief Steward of the Koons' Trail in Mifflinburg, will conduct a birder's walk at the trail during the Sunday of Buggy Days in Mifflinburg, or May 25th. Those wanting to participate should walk to the trail kiosk on North 4th Street by the Hassenplug Covered Bridge. The walk will begin at 3 pm. There is no rain date. Enjoy an hour with Joe who knows the area -- its birds and wild flowers well.

ADOPT-A-ROAD Cleanup with the Geoff Goodenow Sunday, April 6th and June 1, both 1 p.m.

Those 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 over 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. While waiting for others to arrive you may see waterfowl, herons, kingfishers or an osprey. In any event you will take in the peace and quiet of Penns Creek and the view of Jack's Mountain cloaked in a mature stand of hemlocks and mixed hardwoods with an understory of rhododendrons.

landowners or retiring farmers receive a list of persons interested in finding a farm. The staff and the two parties meet to discuss goals and to try to explore different kinds of farm transfers.

The PA Farm Link program started in 1994 and is located in the Harrisburg office of the Center For Rural Pennsylvania. Such programs are important for the state since almost one quarter of Pennsylvania's farm operators are age 65 or older; the average age is 52.2 years old. PA Farm Link brochures and applications are available from Marion Bowland, Farm Link coordinator, (717) 787-9555. Nationwide there are 15 successful linking programs. Conservation easements may also be part of the solution. A pamphlet detailing easements is available from the Linn Conservancy.

Currently PA loses 1,000 farms annually. Data suggests that at least 25% of the loss in farm numbers nationally is due to the financial inability of new farmers to enter the industry.

Montandon Marsh is a Top Priority

Since 1988 when the Merrill W. Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy was formed, one of our primary interests has been the very special site, Montandon Marsh, in Northumberland County. In cooperation with land owners like Central Builder's Supply, the Linn Conservancy has held numerous educational walks on the northern and southern sections of the Marsh. Conservancy members who are professors at Bucknell University have conducted scientific work at the site with private and public funding in order to better understand the hydrology and wildlife of the area. Some of this research has been presented at informational meetings for the public and local government officials at the West Chillisquaque Township building. In 1993, the work of the Linn Conservancy was recognized by the Northumberland County Conservation District when they presented the Swank Award to the group for its work in the Marsh.

Shortly after that the Conservancy board revised its mission paragraph to formally reflect its interests to read "...the Linn Conservancy seeks to protect and preserve significant ecological sites in the Union County and upper Northumberland County region for present and future generations." Two years later the Linn Conservancy was successful in a Key '93 grant application for the purchase of a key tract in the Marsh which it plans to have completed this year. The Conservancy is also working with the Milton Area Industrial Authority (MAIDA) on protection of wetlands presently under their jurisdiction.

Thoughts on Development

Last year at a conference on neo-traditional development convened by the National Association of Home Builders, most of the speakers argued in favor of building compact, mixed use, pedestrian-friendly communities. Nearly all bemoaned the inflexibility of local subdivision codes, road standards in particular.

As one builder put it, "The typical code requires roads wide enough to land a 747 on." Another said, "Too-wide streets encourage speeding and are unattractive." Big roads are also expensive: "They can add up to \$9,000 to the cost of a house."

Next to me throughout the conference was a representative of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, a regional organization devoted to restoring the Chesapeake Bay. After the first complaint about residential road standards, he turned to me and said, "I completely agree."

The environmentalists quietly explained that less pavement meant less runoff, less sedimentation and less nonpoint source pollution. This in turn meant a healthier Chesapeake Bay.

In theory, a healthy economy and environment go hand in hand, yet in practice, environmentally innovative developers often face inflexible regulations. When the cost and delay of fighting those rules are too great, the by-the-book approach will prevail over innovation, even if it hurts the environment.

Currently, most regulators deal with one issue at a time, as if each existed in a vacuum. A more holistic approach would answer a host of problems, including the following:

- Streets: Must residential streets be 36 to 42 feet wide when 24 feet is safer and cheaper? Overly wide streets mean more paving, runoff, and tree removal, all of which hurt the environment while increasing costs.
- Parking: Does every parking lot have to accommodate maximum Christmas Eve traffic, even though it is half-empty the rest of the year? Parking lots should be sized to meet typical customer flow. Shared parking can be encouraged, with overflow areas surfaced with grass or porous

be more attractive, efficient and, above all, profitable than traditional cookie-cutter sprawl. We need to encourage these innovations and reward the creative developers who want to use them. "Activists and Top Builders Share Goals" by Ed McMahon, director of American Greenways Program of the Conservation Fund and taken from the newsletter of the Conservation Fund, *Common Ground* Vol. 7 No. 6 September/October 1996.

People Effect Change:

Membership in the Conservancy Supports Land Conservation Locally

Not everyone can put in time going to local township supervisors' or planning commission meetings, blaze trails and to maintain them, or do plant inventories. We are thankful for those who have the knowledge, the interest, and the time to do this work. Most of us write the check to support such work and more. At this time we would like to thank the following individuals and businesses which support the work of the Merrill W. Linn Land and Waterways Conservancy through membership and additional contributions. We would like to thank all of you. Without your check writing support we could not persist. Enclosed is a list of our current members and those who have joined us most recently.

Additional Giving and New Members Help Linn Conservancy Meet Its Goals

We would like to also thank those who were able to increase their level of giving or who made additional monetary gifts as of March 31st. They are: Judy and Bill Becker, Ed Culver, Shirley and Dahle Bingaman, T. Shane Murray, Libby Meadow and Paul Sussman, Jan and Guy Temple. Robert and Dede Gronlund also gave a gift in memory of Marge Falso, former Conservancy Director.

New members are: Thomas & Lindsay Beck, Madeline Blamble, Ronald A. & Jessica S. Cohen, Rob Cook & Kathy Graham, Bob & Noel Curtis, Cynthia G. Davis, William S. Diehl, Jeffrey C. Evans, Walter J. and Patricia T. Fisher, William Haas, Duane Haggy, Mary Ellen Jansen, David Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. Brick Kepler, Carl & Sabrina Kirby, Elizabeth Kling, Dr. Wayne E. Manning, Patsy Marra, Margaret O. Moyer, Steven C. Miller, David & Marcia Milne, Margaret Moyer, Phoebe & Ted Oshirak, Marie Pizzorno, Mr. & Mrs. Samuel C. Ranck, Phyllis Rich, Barbara Schnure, Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Stanton, Dr. Richard Ward, Jace Watson, Teresa Williams, and Dr. & Mrs. Jerry Youkey. Welcome aboard!

Rob Cook and Kate Hastings are New Board Members

Rob Cook is a native of Clinton County and has been working in the Union County area for the last eight years. He and his wife, Kathleen Graham, have relocated to Lewisburg in the last year. Rob does general contracting as well as specializing in remodeling, cabinet work, and restoration woodwork. He studied English at Penn State University and was a journalist while in the Navy. He was founder and president of the Bald Eagle Folk Collective which brought performers of heritage music to central Pennsylvania. Rob Cook is also a guitar and fiddle player who has performed under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Humanities Council.

Kate Hastings, a former president of the Linn Conservancy and a resident of Watsontown, is returning to the board. She was off the board while completing work on a doctorate in communication from Penn State University. She is currently an instructor at Susquehanna University in the Department of Communications and Theatre, advisor to the student newspaper, and coordinator of the Film Institute there. Kate has served on boards of the Milton Chamber of Commerce and the West Branch Area YMCA. She was also a charter director of the Linn Conservancy when it incorporated in 1988, its first secretary and then president from 1994-1995. Kate assists her husband, Tom Patten in operating the Great Susquehanna Piano Company of Milton.

Rob Cook and Kate Hastings join thirteen others as directors of the Conservancy.

Trail Workers at Dale's Ridge, Koons, Shamokin Mountain, and Linn Trails

Board Member Profiles of June Hoyle and Gil Black *By Neal Woodruff*

In the decade of its existence, the Merrill Linn Conservancy has had countless hours of devoted help and support from many volunteer workers. Among them are several who have served on the Conservancy board from the beginning, selflessly helping to find its path and sustain its growth.

June Hoyle was a close friend of Merrill Linn, the outdoorsman in whose memory the Conservancy was founded. Indeed, Merrill Linn was instrumental in June and Preston Hoyle's moving to this community to establish Preston's medical practice in 1960. It was he who later introduced the Hoyle's children to the woods where he loved to camp and where he taught them woodcraft. After Merrill's death in 1987, June was one of the founders of the Conservancy. From the beginning she has taken initiatives to establish and find a comfortable place for the Conservancy in the community, encouraging others to participate in its work and activities, introducing the organization to people who might not have found it for themselves. Once a school teacher, June found her niche on the Education Committee of the Conservancy, helping find ways to formulate and forward its mission to promote conservation and ecology. More recently she has served on the Membership and Development Committee, which has sought to increase membership and funding for special projects. Her work has given the Conservancy strength and continuity.

Gil Black is a native of Butler. Named to the Linn Board of Directors initially as a representative of the Sierra Club, Gil has been a member of the Board from the outset in 1988. Gil discovered Lewisburg as he made his commute from his mother's home in Butler to his work place in New York. In retirement, he and his wife, Betty, moved here in 1982. Soon they found themselves engaged in the struggle to ban the burner and became active in OUE. Gil was one of the "Infamous Thirteen" arrested in Harrisburg for demonstrating against USPCI, and he has become an expert on the economics and politics of solid waste disposal and toxic release. He has served the Conservancy as liaison to the neighboring North Central Conservancy and to the Pennsylvania Alliance of Land Trust, PALTA, an organization of conservancies. He has been the treasurer of the Conservancy in recent years. A gentle, ironic activist, he is a careful researcher always in command of facts -- often after ferreting them out or computing them himself. His intelligent partisanship in behalf of ecological good sense is always at the service of the Conservancy.

Treasury Slot is Open

Gil and Betty Black plan to be moving to a warm winter climate and we are anticipating Gil's move by seeking to replace him in the Treasury slot so as to make a smooth transition for the organization and for the person assuming the job. We thought that amongst our members there might be one or more who would have the skill and temperment to become our next Treasurer. So, we asked Gil Black to write a brief description of the the job that he has held for several years. He wrote, "the treasurer makes all the payments upon authorization of the president, keeps a computerized record of receipts and disbursements, deposits receipts in the checking account, manages cash by purchasing certificates of deposit or other financial instruments, files state and federal tax forms, and reports to the Board on the status of finances." Call Gil at 523-7627 for further details or Jeannette or Geoff at the office. It would be ideal if we have several people inquire so that we know of skills and interest in this area. Please do not hesitate to speak up if you have the inclination.

Coordinator's Report *by Jeannette Lasansky*

As coordinator for the Linn Conservancy my work has been quite varied since starting in early July. I average 12-15 hours a week on Conservancy business, initiating action, following up on others' suggestions, and making sure that the work load for this volunteer-driven organization moves along as smoothly as possible.

I meet weekly with the President (and soon-to-be President -Elect) responding to their needs and ideas and sharing my concerns as well as the events of the intervening seven days. Mine is a balancing act between the many activities the Linn Conservancy does for its constituency: networking with the Union County planning staff (and planning to do the same in Northumberland County eventually) on various areas of mutual concern and initiatives; e-mailing (often), calling, faxing, and occasionally doing old-fashioned letter writing to board and committee members about easement or land acquisition progress (slow and steady), about conferences and other learning and networking opportunities, about committee, board and membership base building, about grant opportunities, about trail maintenance and easement monitoring, and more; working with private landowners who seek more information about protecting special lands including stewardship strategies.

Briefs:

The Conservancy has received a number of troubling inquiries about roadside clearing by some area municipalities. The majority have come from East Buffalo Township where a mower/trimmer with a long extension arm is in use. It reaches far beyond the road far beyond the road pavement and trims far above the ground. Those who have been in touch with us have encountered severe damage to roadside trees and shrubbery. Many wish to preserve natural berm as a habitat for birds and animals.

It is not clear how widespread a problem this is. A similar machine is used in Kelly Township and perhaps in other municipalities. We ask that Conservancy members who have been concerned about such roadside trimming share their thoughts with us and urge others to do so. We prefer that you let us know in writing, for we can make best use of written testimony. Please send it to Neal Woodruff, 201 Lakeside Drive, Lewisburg, 17837. If a phone number is included we can ask for further elaboration if needed. Prompt response will aid us in determining what remedial action the Conservancy can and should undertake.

The Conservancy continues to add to its library of reference material. One of the most recent acquisitions is *Calming Traffic* a concept of interest to those who live in a county where Routes 15, 45, and 192 as well as Interstate 80 converge. This new title as well as several dozen other books and videos are available for those who are interested in borrowing them. Call or write for our complete listing.

Thanks to MaryAnn Beirly, the Naturalist at Raymond B. Winter State Park, for sharing all of the park's slides with us and allowing Linn to duplicate those that might be of use in our video. Similar access to thousands of slides was provided to Neal Woodruff by the Union County Historical Society and its Oral Traditions Project as well.

Thanks to Chris and Kate Snyder at the Natural Foods Store, Citizens Electric, and Mifflinburg's Heritage and Revitalization office for giving the Conservancy space in their mailings -- spreading knowledge of the Conservancy's work to their customers. We have reached nearly nine thousand families through these business affiliations. You may have been one of them!

Thanks to the *Standard/Journal* for working with us on a second tabloid which is coming out this month. Additional copies are for the taking outside the office of the Union County Historical Society in the Union County Courthouse.

Thanks also to Ann Gelnett, our historian and archivist, for maintaining the Linn Conservancy scrap book(s). Ann needs someone to clip, save, and send her articles on the Linn Conservancy that appear in the *Daily Item*. Please call the office if you are willing to do this important job. All you need to do is clip and bring the material to the office every four months or so. We clip from the *Journal* and *Mifflinburg Telegraph* both of which come to the office.

Thanks also to Chris Snyder and Mary Koons for brainstorming with the Membership and Development Committee and to Don Steese and Rose Ann Koons who plan to do the same with the Public Awareness Committee. Also to the Natural Foods Store which is helping the Linn Conservancy at its Lewisburg Arts Festival food booth by supplying us with fruit spritzers and organic food snacks. Look for our food booth in or near the Northern Central Bank parking lot. The Natural Foods Store also supplies us with table plants at the annual dinner and has since we started asking.

Have a good spring and summer. Enjoy our trails. Stop by the office when you have a moment and say "hello." Pick up a *Rural Routes* brochure you might be missing there or at Mary Koons, the Natural Foods Store, or Donehower Sporting Goods. Volunteer when you can!