

Linn Log

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

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

conserve@ptd.net

Spring 2003

Educational Events:

Register Now for the Annual Dinner on May 7

The Susquehanna Greenway will be speaker **Brian Auman's** topic at the Conservancy's annual dinner. Following an initial phase that dealt with vision and values, the Susquehanna Greenway Project is now concentrating on Greenway design and planning. Brian Auman, senior planner at the Community Resource Center, SEDA-COG, is a graduate of Penn State with a degree in landscape architecture and the recipient of a master's degree in natural resource management from Utah State University. We welcome Brian to the Lewisburg area and welcome, also, his wife Sue to Lewisburg and to the board of the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance.

This is the Conservancy's 15th annual dinner; the first dinner was a pot luck meal on the porch of Rosie and Charlie Walker's home, where the Conservancy office is now housed. The dinner this year will be held at La Primavera Italiano Ristorante on Route 45, just west of Lewisburg. Please join us to learn more about the work that has been done on this large and long-term project and what it will mean in our area. Brian's talk will include specifics; we will learn how we, too, can "think globally and act locally" by becoming involved in this large endeavor. For an evening of good food and fellowship, as well as an interesting presentation on an environmental issue of regional importance, please send in the enclosed dinner reservation form before April 28.

Bird and Plant Walk on Koons' Trail - April 27 at 1:00 PM

Joe Southerton will lead a spring wildflower and birding walk on the Koons' Trail on Sunday, April 27. The walk is easy and no special foot gear is necessary. Those interested should gather shortly before one pm at

the Harold Haney Ball Field parking lot on North Eighth Street in Mifflinburg. The parking lot is at the western entrance to the Koons' Trail and the trail walk will begin at one o'clock sharp. In addition to spring wildflowers, there should be migratory birds as well, so bring your binoculars.

Birds and Flowers: Walk on Shamokin Mountain Trail - May 4 at 8:00 AM

The Shamokin Mountain Trail walk will start at eight am to increase our chances of seeing a large number of birds. Typical spring flowers at this time of year include spring beauties, hepatica, wild lily of the valley, and various violets, while the birds include the typical "woods" varieties such as titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. There may also be some migrants from the tropics such as scarlet tanagers, flycatchers, indigo buntings, and warblers. Bring binoculars if you have them. The group will also do tree and fern identifications and take note of introduced species. The walk is easy and no special foot gear is necessary. Meet at the trail kiosk. Drive south of Furnace Road on Stein Lane, going up the ridge; after the clearing for the power line, make a left into a private drive (the first left after seeing the Union Township road sign) and drive down the lane one-quarter mile. Please park so as not to obstruct the lane. Trail-builder, biologist, and Bucknell professor-emeritus **Wayne McDiffett** will be the guide.

FYI: Forest Resources Events, April 24-May 17

Thursday, April 24: Eastern Hardwood Regeneration Institute's "Dealing with Problem Plants Interfering with Regeneration." Contact Michael Powell at (814) 863-1113 or mjp175@psu.edu.

Thursday, May 15: "Controlling Competing Vegetation in the Forest: What is it? Why is it a problem? What can you do about it?" 7 to 8 pm, at the Central PA Institute of Science and Technology, Pleasant Gap, Centre County. Contact Dave Jackson at (814) 355-4897 or drj11@psu.edu.

Saturday, May 17: "Evaluating Your Forest Resources: Workshop for Landowners." This is a hands-on course in which landowners will learn to measure and collect forest resource inventory data, identify species, and to determine the volume and value of a given tree. You will be introduced to some basic units of measure including cords, board feet, and stumpage value. 9 am-12 noon, at the Laurel Haven Conservation Education Center. Contact the Centre County Cooperative Extension at (814) 355-4897.

Halfway Run Environmental Center Events

Those who attended **SnowFest** in February had a wonderful time. Members of the Linn Conservancy and the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance staffed two tables during the event and, although they were outside in the snow, stayed reasonably warm and were able to speak to many new folks to let them know what we are doing locally.

Now it is spring and a series of new events are planned at the Halfway Run Environmental Center and the Sheary-Linn Amphitheatre. The latter was built, and both educational areas furnished, with the support of the Linn Conservancy through two successful Sheary grants.

A complete schedule of events is available at the Halfway Run Environmental Learning Center or can be obtained by calling the park at 570-966-1455, weekdays between 8 am and 4 pm.

Our Environment Matters:

Northumberland County's PNDI

The work of The Nature Conservancy on Northumberland County's Natural Diversity Inventory has been completed and, following some revisions, a draft of the document was submitted to Northumberland County. It is hoped that the county will accept the draft and that the plan will be disseminated to the different township planning bodies. The information in the Inventory may help these bodies as they make land use decisions, decisions that might otherwise adversely affect special habitats. In the meantime, a copy of the draft is available for you to read at the Linn Conservancy's office.

The Conservancy has already begun to incorporate some of this information into our own work efforts as it pertains to our service area of upper Northumberland County. During the past winter, at the land owner's request,

we visited a farm with vernal ponds to begin to explore the possibility of a conservation easement or other protective action. This farm is one of six properties in Point Township with these special vernal habitats and was identified, along with the Montandon Marsh complex, as especially worthy of protection.

Exploring the Forest with Children

By James C. Finley, Penn State Forest Resources Extension

Have you ever gone for a walk in the woods with a child? Young people have great energy and curiosity. They discover many things that we walk past without noticing--discoveries such as a small flower or an interesting insect. Perhaps it's a matter of perspective; we see the woods as adults, towering above the forest floor. Perhaps it's our tendency to hurry through the woods and our desire to show our small companions what we know and see. However, we can learn much from children by slowing down and letting them reawaken our sense of discovery in the forest.

Toddlers stop, squat, examine, touch, peer, and enjoy the environs of the forest. There are so many beautiful things near the forest floor down where they explore. Perhaps your companions find the skeleton of a fallen leaf. Ask them to take a closer look and make comparisons. "See the veins? See how much the leaf's veins look like the veins in your hands? Why do you think both our hands and leaves have veins?" Compare the veins in the old decaying leaf with this year's foliage.

Some wildflowers splash the forest floor with color, but many flowers are small and not very showy. Nevertheless, to a child, finding flowers on the forest floor is exciting and provides incentives for further exploration. A common violet is a big discovery, when you find it on your own. Even more exciting are rare flowers, or those that have fallen from high in the forest canopy. Perhaps you don't know what they are called or where they came from--so what? Discover the answer together.

Bugs fascinate children. Most of them are harmless, and close examination will help you discover many aspects of their lives. See how they wander and scurry. Do their legs move in sequence? Pause and watch. Most children love to look at little creatures. Before you go to the woods, buy a magnifying glass or cube (a "bug box") so that you can look closely at insects, fungi, flowers, and other things.

The forest floor is where lots of things happen. Take the time to see things from a child's perspective by bending down, sitting, or kneeling. You may wish to carry a light folding stool, seat cushion, or blanket to make getting closer more comfortable. Maybe you will excite a sense of adventure in your young companions and spark a love for the forest that they will carry with them for life.

To learn more about teaching children about forests and forest stewardship, request the free publication, Forest Stewardship bulletin #3: Teaching Youth about Forest Stewardship. The publication is available by calling 1-800-235-WISE (toll-free), sending e-mail to RNRExt@psu.edu, or writing to: Forest Stewardship Program, Forest Resources Extension, The Pennsylvania State University, 7 Ferguson building, University Park, PA 16802.

Invasive Plant Exhibit at Dale/Engle/Walker House

Clyde Peeling is working on the Conservancy's first exhibit at the Dale/Engle/Walker house, an exhibit that will focus on invasive plants in Pennsylvania. Multiflora rose, autumn olive, shatter cane, purple loosestrife, and Canada-, musk-, and bull-thistle are commonly seen examples of invasive plants in north-central Pennsylvania and the former two have certainly made their presence felt on the D/E/W property. There are some particularly informative web sites on the subject, including the National Biological Information Infrastructure & National Invasive Species Council at www.invasivespecies.gov; the U.S. National Park Service at www.nature.nps.gov/wv/index.htm; the Plant Conservation Alliance at www.nps.gov/plants/alien/ and, a favorite, the Delaware River Invasive Plant Partnership at www.paflora.org/DRIPP. We plan to have a lecture program on invasive plants at the exhibition this fall and will announce it in the *Linn Log* next fall.

Please stop in at the Dale/Engle/Walker House when it is open for house tours and for exhibitions like this one, on Sunday afternoons from 2-4 pm in August, September, and October. The regular admission charge that goes to the maintenance of the house is \$3 for adults and \$2 for children over 6 years old (one dollar less in each category for current Linn Conservancy members.) The Conservancy's invasive plant exhibit will be displayed from mid-September through October; the preceding exhibit will relate to historical flooding of the Susquehanna and its impact on such towns as Milton, Lewisburg, Sunbury, and Selinsgrove.

Conservancy members interested in helping the Union County Historical Society by being trained as

house tour/exhibition guides should call 524-8666.

United States a Massive Water Consumer

The United States ranked lowest among 147 countries for its inefficient water usage, according to an article in **Common Ground**, a newsletter of conservation news from the Conservation Fund. This dead-last score on usage reflected the nation's massive consumption of water in agriculture coupled with the sector's tiny contribution to the gross domestic product. In this first World Poverty Index, released by the United Kingdom's Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the World Water Council (www.worldwatercouncil.org), countries are rated in five water-related areas--usage, access, resources, capacity, and environmental impact. The U.S. ranked sixth in environmental impact, but scored lower in resources because of the scarcity of water in the West. The U.S. also ranks high in per capita domestic water use and volume of water per dollar of industrial production, making the U.S. the world's highest per capita water consumer.

Bald Eagle Demonstration Areas Shed Light on Forest Resources Management

by Tracey Coulter and Rance Scott Harmon, Penn State Forest Resources

On a crisp day last autumn, Service Forester Tom Strausbaugh led 35 landowners and foresters on a tour of the Bald Eagle State Forest Demonstration Area in Union County. Because timber harvesting and other forest management practices can have long-term, dramatic effects on forests, Strausbaugh helped create the area so visitors could see the results of different practices firsthand. For example, in one of the demonstration units, Strausbaugh points out that after removing smaller, less vigorous trees, the remaining trees responded by significantly increasing their growth rates because there was less competition for sunlight, water, and nutrients. The result is heartier trees that can grow faster and produce more wildlife food, such as nuts and seeds.

One of the most eye-opening stops on the tour is a 1/4-acre area enclosed by a woven-wire fence. The fence prevents white-tailed deer access, and there is a dramatic difference in vegetation inside and outside of the fence. Not only are the tree seedlings and sprouts unbrowsed and much taller in the fenced area, there is also a much greater diversity of trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and other plants. Last year, legislators toured the site with Dr. Gary Alt, of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Deer Management Section, to see firsthand how a large deer population reduces forest regeneration and growth.

The Bald Eagle State Forest Demonstration Area contains nine different management units. Eight of these units show different timber harvesting methods, and one is a control area where no trees were cut. The units represent examples of both good and poor forestry practices, and Strausbaugh shows the group the benefits and consequences of each.

In the past year, Strausbaugh has led tours for Conservation District staff members, 4-H groups, and forest landowner associations. Strausbaugh is particularly proud of the youth groups that use the demonstration area as a learning resource. A group of local homeschool students used the site to prepare for the Snyder County Envirothon competition, and won. The Snyder, Union, and Northumberland Future Farmers of America (FFA) hold their annual timber competition at the demonstration area. Currently, in a joint environmental education program with R.B. Winter State Park, lesson plans for different ages are being developed. The lessons cover diverse environmental issues and help educators incorporate forest resources management into their courses.

A self-guiding trail allows people to visit the Bald Eagle Demonstration Area at their convenience. A trail guide is available at the Bald Eagle State Forest District Office in Union County, about eight miles west of Mifflinburg on PA 45. The trail guide provides directions to the demonstration site, which is less than a mile from the District Office. The office is typically open from 8 am to 4:30 pm on weekdays, but visitors can tour the demonstration area any time.

The demonstration site's trail also winds through the adjacent State Game Lands, allowing visitors to see various wildlife management practices, such as brush piles, grape vine management, border cuts, herbaceous openings, a vernal pond, crab apple tree plants (with protective tree shelters), and wildlife nesting structures.

Managing forest resources is a complex issue in Pennsylvania. Since private forest landowners hold over 60 percent of Pennsylvania's 17 million acres of forestland, the management of these private lands has a large impact on the overall sustainability of forest resources in the Commonwealth. Forest management demonstration areas give visitors an opportunity to see different management techniques firsthand, and

allow landowners and citizens to make informed decisions. The sites demonstrate that with proper planning and careful management, private forest landowners can maintain vigorous, healthy, and productive forests.

Sustained Support for Land Conservation

Voters have again demonstrated a commitment to open space conservation by approving 74 percent of the ballot measures they faced in 2002, up from a 70 percent approval rate in 2001. The findings were released January 31 in *LandVote 2002*, a report by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL).

According to *LandVote 2002*, 141 of 189 parks and open space ballot measures passed in 2002, generating more than \$10 billion in new funding for 28 states, including about \$5.7 billion for land acquisition, preservation, and protection.

"Voters in a bipartisan manner have again voiced their strong support for protection of natural lands, clean water, and safe communities," said LTA President Rand Wentworth. "They understand that we are losing two million acres each year, and they have shown their concern that the lands we protect today will affect the American landscape for all time."

"2002 was another year of very strong voter support for open space protection across the country," said TPL President Will Rogers. "At a time when the threshold for government spending and borrowing is rising, Americans continue to demonstrate that they will pay to protect the places that are special to them."

Voter support for open space was particularly strong on November 5, 2002, when 95 of 112 measures -- or 85 percent -- were approved, generating \$2.9 billion for open space acquisition, restoration, and protection. That passage rate was an increase from the 75 percent seen on Election Day 2001.

People, Businesses, and Organizations Effect Change:

Additional Volunteers Sought for Koons' Trail

Joe Southerton, chief trail steward of the Koons' Trail in Mifflinburg, thanks those who have helped maintain the trail in 2002: two 4-H groups--an equestrian group headed by Diana and Dennis Mack and another, the New Berlin Lucky Clovers, who are members of the Conservancy--and Rick & Vivian Bailey, Brad Huntington, Lyle Hobart, and the Southerton Family. Joe is looking for some new people willing to "adopt-a-month" at the trail and for a person willing to keep the trail kiosks stocked with brochures. If you are interested, please call the Conservancy at 524-8666 or 522-0487, or write to us at P.O. Box 501, Lewisburg, PA, or conserve@ptd.net. Joe would like to hear from you!

Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance Board for 2003

The Board of the Buffalo Creek Watershed of the Linn Conservancy recently had a meeting at which new board members were elected.

Serving until February 2006 are:

Shawn McLaughlin of Kelly Township; Allan Grundstrom (vice chair) of East Buffalo Township; Lorraine Lenhart of Mifflinburg

Terms expiring in February 2005:

Owen Anderson (secretary) of Buffalo Township; Shanon Burkland of Middleburg; Jeff Bowers (chair) of Freeburg

Terms Expiring February 2004:

Sue Auman of East Buffalo Township; Luke Petre of Kelly Township; Jim Sanders of Millmont

Conservancy Board members John C. Snook of Limestone Township and Jan Peterson of Lewisburg are also on the board of this new initiative. Elizabeth Sterling of Hartley Township and Eve Minson from SEDA-COG were earlier BCWA board members. Those who would like to support the BCWA may send checks to the Linn Conservancy; write BCWA on the memo line and the moneys will be used exclusively for this effort.

More news about the group is on the blue insert in this *Linn Log* and information about the completion of the group's first grant, including work on watershed signage and placemats, will be shared at the annual dinner. Work sponsored by a second DEP grant is underway, including production of a video on the Buffalo Creek Watershed as well as the installations of two stream-monitoring/gaging stations, one of which is in Buffalo Township near the

Dale's Ridge Trail. There will be more on watershed work and research efforts in the next *Linn Log*. For late-breaking BCWA events, please visit the Conservancy's web site at www.linnconservancy.org.

Those working on the new video about the Buffalo Creek watershed are seeking slides for possible inclusion. This educational video is part of a successful Growing Greener grant secured by the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance of the Linn Conservancy. It is their hope that the video will be available to educators and to the public in early 2004.

Slides need to have been taken in Union County and illustrate brook trout, fishing in local streams, spring water being gathered, a local well-driller's truck, horseback riders, mountain bikers, the area near the Spruce Run Reservoir as well as close-ups of cherry, hemlock, oak, and maple trees. Other views taken within the Buffalo Creek watershed area would be appreciated. Slides should be marked with name and phone number.

To drop off slides for consideration or to get involved with some "assignments," please come to the office of the Union County Historical Society in the Union County Courthouse on South Second Street, Lewisburg, between 8:30 am-noon or 1-4:30 pm Mondays through Fridays. Or call 522-0487 for additional information.

Leaving Tracks by Jeannette Lasansky

An interesting project has now come to fruition and the story of its beginning is one I'd like to share.

Mark Holman, a former Conservancy board member and private forestry consultant, contacted me several years ago about a group of native swamp white oak seedlings he had begun to nurture. Because I remembered the seedlings were coming of age, I contacted him late last fall. His reply note to me recounts the tale's beginning, and about 20 of us will have the special opportunity to help the tale progress. Mark wrote on December 28:

I probably have 15-20 swamp white oak seedlings that are about a foot in height and ready to be transplanted. As I mentioned to you, John Clark [former Conservancy president, botanist, and mentor to many] contacted me by phone a couple of months before he died, asking that I collect some swamp oak seedlings or acorns and arrange to have them planted on or near the Koons property along Buffalo Creek [home of our second easement and site of the Koons' Trail] to help prevent creek bank scouring and erosion. John saw that some of the trees on the south side of the creek were on their way out, and wanted to see them replaced with native swamp oaks. He also mentioned that the "lawn area" on the north side could use some erosion control via oak plantings.

I collected the acorns that fall, after John's death, and kept them in my refrigerator until the following spring when they were planted out and germinated. Thus the trees were "conceived"...

Mark went on to suggest that the Conservancy plant some of the seedlings along Buffalo Creek at the Koons property and that, in doing so, we would need to prepare the area for planting and then watch over the seedlings until they could fend for themselves. Mark suggests that we have a few members "adopt a seedling." This will entail planting 6-8 seedlings at the site this spring in coordination with chief trail steward Joe Southerton and present land owner Mary Koons, and act as caretaker during the seedlings' first critical years. We have recently learned that Mifflinburg Middle School students in the "Builders Club" will be these tree stewards, working under the direction initially of Don Ulrich. This will be about a five-year commitment for these young people and their advisors.

Mark thought that those seedlings not planted at the Koons site in Mifflinburg could be purchased with a donation to the Conservancy made in John's name. Given advance notice, Mark will dig up a seedling and have it ready for pickup. He is also willing to give advice concerning the selection of prospective planting sites and their preparation and maintenance.

For those of us who knew John, this story resonates so – that he would be concerned about completing an assignment when time was fleeting and other matters pressing, and that he would hand over the "assignment" to someone so capable who in turn would turn to us all to complete the circle. Please call Mark directly (966-2222 office or 966-4878 home) or call or write the Conservancy at 524-8666 or conserve@ptd.net to volunteer as a seedling steward at the Koons property or to purchase a memorial seedling for your own site, or both!

I have long appreciated the white oak as it stands in full maturity or when harvested by basket makers, including the Shivelys, Boops, and Diehls from the western parts of Union County. Once, when meeting a young basket maker, I had to smile when I looked at his T-shirt which proclaimed, "God made the white oak for basket makers." He was part of a long tradition of those who found the qualities of green hand-riven

white oak splints a miracle to experience. And those who own baskets a century or more old can attest to their special qualities over time.

The Clark oak seedlings will no doubt grow to have different functions.

Members Help Linn Conservancy Meet Its Goals Through Gifts

Welcome to new members: Robert & Christena Harder, Janet Jones and Ben Marsh, Kathryn Kopchik and Steven Styers, and Amy Graham.

Thanks to members who since early December have made donations, additional financial gifts, and/or increased their level of giving: the Union County Conservation District, Tom & Sue Travis, Martha Reed, June & Preston Hoyle, Jean Ruhl, Ethel Ruhl, Anni's Inn & Outings, Wayne McDiffett, and Clyde & Diane Peeling. These gifts and new memberships when combined with steady membership support help the Conservancy grow and do its work better.

Enclosed in this *Linn Log* is a roster of the Linn Conservancy's supporters. If there are friends or business associates of yours who are not on the list and who you think would be interested in supporting our work by becoming members or by helping us in other ways through work or needed in-kind donations, please advise the office at 524-8666 or conserve@ptd.net and we will follow-up on your suggestions.

As non-profit organizations such as the Linn Conservancy mature, estate planning, including planned giving and bequests, is important. Such planned gifts form the basis for endowment growth and long-term visioning of the organization while membership dues and annual unrestricted gifts support the group's annual budget as well as grants for special projects done in one or multiple years. The Conservancy's Heritage Club is composed of those who have made bequests, executed planned giving documents, placed conservation easements on land, or made land gifts part of their environmental stewardship agenda. Roger Curran, past-president and current board secretary, has written the enclosed material on the Conservancy's Heritage Club. We ask that you give consideration to this option.

In Brief:

Thanks to Robert Koons who made a contribution for the upkeep of the Koons' Trail.

Thanks to Beth Clark for her major contribution to the John G. Clark Memorial Fund which supports the environmental work of area educators and is named for her son, the late botanist and educator.

Thanks to members Allen Grundstrom, Owen Anderson, and Jeff Bowers who, in concert with others, wrote a Growing Greener Grant for the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance which was submitted by the Conservancy for the DEP grant round now pending.

Thanks to David and Vicki Heberlig, Margaret Moyer, and Joe Keller who prepared this newsletter for mailing.

Thanks to members Neal Woodruff, Owen Anderson, Ed Culver, and Geoff Goodenow who are working with Jeannette Lasansky and John Walter of Milton on the new Conservancy-produced video about the Buffalo Creek Watershed. The primary writer for the video is Shawn McLaughlin, Union County Planning Director and a board member of the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance. We look forward to completion of the project and its first showing in 2004. Videos on the Montandon Marsh and on the work of the Conservancy are available for loan or purchase at the office of the Union County Historical Society in the Union County Courthouse. The titles are "The Montandon Wetlands: A Special Place in Our Backyard" and "A Vision of a Valley."

Thanks to SUN Bank which allowed the Conservancy to use its corporate offices in Lewisburg for the Conservancy's recent strategic planning retreat and to members, Susan & Jim Mathias, for conducting the retreat.

Thanks to John Fernsler and Geoff Goodenow who staffed our table at **SnowFest**.

Thanks to Cecelia Peterson, Joan Fernsler, and Nancy Curran who are working on our annual dinner as this *Log* goes to press and to member David Goehring who, as VP of the Union County Historical Society, secured a Pennsylvania Humanities Council speaker on Myra Lloyd Dock, one of the state's first environmentalists, for a special program and dinner at the Union County Sportsmen's Club in Weikert on April 7th.

Bill Belford and Rhoda Fasano, two past board members, died recently as did charter member Elva Reitz. Rhoda had worked on media outreach as a member of the public awareness committee while Bill was instrumental in our acquisition of the Belles property in the northern portion of the Montandon Marsh complex. It was through his sustained efforts that Eugene Belles agreed to sell this important parcel. Bill also helped us resolve a timber trespass on a small section of that property. He held steady to a vision of protection of these wetlands and the Conservancy is still hard at work on this shared vision.

Wish List:

- Additional trail stewards for the Koons' Trail in Mifflinburg.
- A new TV-VCR, 13-20" combined unit, for educational programming.
- Transferable air mileage for use by those attending annual Land Trust meetings now or in the future.
- People interested in working on fund-raising/development concepts.
- An over-head projector.
- Fresh faces for our Adopt-a-Road section for 2003.
- Volunteers experienced in working on exhibition design and execution.
- **AND**, an endless supply of post-it notes!

Please Note: Your dues are due if there is a red stamp here. You should find a handy business reply envelope enclosed for your convenience. Please help us meet our goals by replying as quickly and as generously as you possibly can this year. Thank you for your past support; it is the foundation upon which the Conservancy relies.