

Linn Log

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

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Roger Curran, editor of *Linn Log*

PO Box 501 Lewisburg, PA 17837
conserve@ptd.net
570-524-8666
FAX 524-8743

Winter 1999

Coming Events:

R.B. Winter Park "Snowfest 1999" on January 31

Come to the park from noon to 4:00 P.M. on Sunday, January 31 and enjoy a fun-filled day. Planned activities include:

- Cross country skiing rental and lessons
- Ice skating rental
- Ice fishing (You must have a valid fishing license if 16 years of age or older.)
- Ice cutting demo. (Historic skill)
- Ice sculpting demo.
- Snow volleyball tournament (Please pre-register your team by Jan. 25.)
- Snow shoe lessons
- Surviving winter weather seminar
- Winter camping demo.
- Mountain biking in winter (Bring you own mtn. bike and helmet to participate.)
- Winter botany walk
- Animals and their adaptations
- Snow flake science and art
- Native American story books by the fire
- Sledding (Bring you own sled.)
- Snowmobile safety and demo.
- Snow person fashion contest (See if you can build the best-dressed snowman or snow woman. You must provide the "cool" apparel!)
- Cold weather safety, first aid and preventive medicine

Watch your local newspaper or call the park (966-1455) for more information.

Coldwater Conference at Penn State - February 20

The third annual *Keystone Coldwater Conference: Multiple Benefits of Streamside Buffers* will be held at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel on Saturday, February 20, 1999. The purpose is to inform individuals from grassroots groups about the value and function of natural and planted riparian vegetation along upland coldwater streams. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Pennsylvania Trout, Audubon Society, and Department of Environmental Protection, among others, will co-host the workshop. The cost is \$20.00 which includes lunch. The Penn Stater is located in Penn State's Research Park. For more information contact Mark Bernhard at 814-863-5121.

Our Environment Matters:

Settlement on Timber Trespass

The Spring 1998 *Linn Log* reported that shortly after the Conservancy's purchase of the 33 acre property in Montandon Marsh a small portion was illegally timbered. With the assistance of board member and long-time Milton attorney William Belford, the Conservancy has now resolved this timber trespass. The owner of the adjacent land and the saw mill operator (who had a timbering agreement with that landowner) have paid the Conservancy the sum of \$13,048 which has been placed in a restricted fund for use in Montandon Marsh preservation. This settlement covers the Conservancy's cost in obtaining a stump survey of timber harvested plus an amount equal to 1 1/2 times the assessed value of the timber. We deeply appreciate Mr. Belford's work on the Conservancy's behalf in reaching an amicable settlement.

We still have the task of dealing with the slash left behind from the timbering. Branches will be trimmed from the trunk sections lying on the ground. The long range plan is to allow natural forest regeneration rather than planting trees. Joining chief site steward John Clark recently as assistant steward of the Montandon Marsh property is long-time conservancy member Allen Schweinsberg.

Linn Reference Book Shelf Grows

Wintertime is a good time to get caught up on reading. Enclosed you will find the first installment of a listing of our books and scientific studies. More to come in the March *Linn Log*.

Conservation Overviews:

1) Stokes and Watson. *Saving America's Countryside/A Guide to Rural Conservation* (John Hopkins University Press), 1989. 306 pp. Major chapters deal with rural concerns, initiating and managing rural conservation programs, analyzing the rural community, land protection techniques available to local governments, voluntary techniques for private property owners, community education, etc. 1 copy.

2) Land Trust Alliance (LTA) *Exchange*, 1989-current and selected earlier issues. Quarterly publication with multiple topics as well as a focus within each issue; excellent and timely. 3 copies each and master group in loose-leaf binder.

3) *Doing Deals: A Guide to Buying Land for Conservation* (LTA and the Trust for Public Land), 1995. 176 pp. Step-by-step analytical approach plus practical techniques. 2 copies.

4) Small, Stephen J. *Preserving Family Lands* (Stephen J. Small, Esq.), 1988. 47 pp. Good, user friendly overview of the concepts and techniques for land conservation across generations. 8 copies.

5) Small, Stephen J. *Preserving Family Lands: Book II* (Stephen J. Small, Esq.), 1997. 119 pp. Takes the message and information in above-mentioned book a step further by presenting more sophisticated tax planning techniques and concepts. 30 copies, some available for sale.

6) *Land Trusts in America: Guardians of the Future* 14 -minute video produced by the LTA. Explains land trusts in layman's terms. Individual projects from Tennessee, New York, Montana, Maine, and California are discussed to illustrate a variety of techniques for land preservation. 2 copies.

7) *For the Common Good* A 16-minute video developed by LTA on conservation easements. 1 copy.

8) Myers, Phyllis. *Lessons from the States: Strengthening Land Conservation Programs Through Grants to Nonprofit Land Trusts* (LTA and the Trust for Public Land), 1992. 72 pp. Details the benefits of partnerships between the public and private non-profit organizations when seeking to protect land and gives a matrix of state grant programs available. 1 copy.

9) *Back Forty* March/April, 1992 - current. This newsletter, published by the Hyperion Society (in conjunction with the University of California, Hastings College of the Law), covers current developments in real estate, land use, taxation, and exempt organization law as those developments may affect conservation and preservation efforts. 1 copy each.

10) *Pennsylvania Conservation Handbook: A Guide for Conservation Organizations, Municipalities and Private Landowners* (Allegheny Land Trust), 1995. 126 pp. in loose-leaf binder. Provides a good overview of all aspects of land protection with chapters that are specific to Pennsylvania. 5 copies.

11) *Your Land is Your Legacy/A Guide to Planning for the Future of Your Farm* by Jeremiah P. Cosgrove and Julia Freedgood (American Farmland Trust), 1997. 60 pp. Gives an overview of different aspects of estate planning that should be considered by those wanting to transition a farm within their families: tax reduction techniques, conservation options, follow-up strategies and resources. 2 copies.

12) *Farmland Forever* 18 minute video by American Farmland Trust. Provides several informative case studies on purchased conservation easements in different regions of the country. 2 copies.

Updated Book on Conservation Options is Now Available

The Conservancy now has available the newly revised book *Conservation Options A Landowners Guide*. It includes the latest 1997 tax law changes that affect land gifts and conservation easements. Thousands of land conservationists, attorneys and financial advisors find this easy-to-understand booklet the best primer to introduce landowners to the range of protection options at their disposal. It explains conservation easements, land donations, bargain sales, remainder interests, charitable trusts and bequests, among other approaches. And it does so in plain English. A glossary, tables that illustrate tax savings, and real-life stories from landowners are included.

Copies may be purchased from the Conservancy at the Union County Historical Society office in the Union County Courthouse for \$6 or by mail for an extra \$3 to cover postage and handling.

Pennsylvania's Environment - A Blueprint for the Future

After more than a year of work and with the help of thousands of people across the Commonwealth, the *Report of the Pennsylvania 21st Century Environment Commission* was issued in September. It is a thoughtful, impressive document deserving of wide-spread attention. Copies are available for loan at the Conservancy's office and, if you haven't already read it, you are urged to do so.

The Commission was established by Governor Ridge in 1997 to consist of 40 members "including environmental, business, academic, elected officials, government and community leaders." Its mission was to recommend "methods and policies to improve the environmental quality of the Commonwealth and measure the results, while allowing for enhanced economic and social progress."

The Commission came to a very simple conclusion:

"A healthy environment, a dynamic economy and the well being of our communities are directly linked. To make progress in one area, Pennsylvania must strive for simultaneous excellence in all."

From that premise broad goals, detailed guidelines and more than 240 specific recommendations were developed.

Promoting responsible land use was found to be the single most pressing environmental issue facing Pennsylvania. The big problem, of course, is sprawl, a subject we visited briefly in the last *Linn Log*. The Commission presented this arresting statistic:

"(Sprawl) ... has long characterized the Commonwealth's growth. In the three decades since 1960, the population of our ten largest metropolitan areas grew by 13 percent, but their developed land area grew by 80 percent."

Success is seen to depend primarily on efforts at the county and local government level because the framework of laws in Pennsylvania concentrates land use decision-making within our communities. But the current Municipalities Planning Code must be amended. It contemplates zoning for development but not conservation of rural communities. Also, the code focuses on intra-municipality planning and impedes any inter-municipal or broader regional cooperation so important to effective land use decision-making. To put this in perspective, there are currently 2,561 municipalities in Pennsylvania. (Talk about fragmentation!) Amendment would not take away local prerogatives but rather permit joint planning and implementation when considered desirable.

Conserving natural resources for sustainable use is a broad goal. Emphasis is placed on the need to repair past environmental damage, recycle abandoned industrial and mining sites, sustain farming and forestry, and preserve natural diversity. And the example can be set on publicly owned lands of which there are *four million acres* in the Commonwealth.

Creating "a healthy environment for healthy people" is addressed "to reduce toward the ultimate goal of eliminating the exposure of people and other organisms to harmful levels of environmental contaminants." Improvements in air and water quality, increases in energy efficiency, and better waste management, as would be expected, are all cited. Regarding the latter, it is the vision of the Commission for Pennsylvania to become "the leader in the development of eco-industrial parks where clusters of industry are encouraged which can benefit each other's excess products, waste and energy streams."

A new paradigm for environmental action is envisioned for the 21st century. The command and control approach, embodied in our environmental laws since the early 1970's, where government sets forth specific standards and penalizes noncompliance, was necessary and successful. But for the future, success is best achieved through measurement of outcomes as opposed to counting inspections. Collaboration is key. The Commission states:

"We will attain the next level of environmental improvement when we develop policies and practices that retain and use appropriate enforcement tools when necessary, but emphasize wide-ranging teamwork and provide guidance and incentives to all and rewards to the good performers."

And undergirding all of the above is the importance of education. "Pennsylvania must invest steadily and with renewed commitment to improve public understanding of environmental riches, remedies and benefits to assist its citizens in their race as stewards." The use of stimulating environmental curricula in the classroom and showcasing beneficial endeavors to the general public are but two examples.

Two graphs from the Commission's Report:

Updates on Great Steam Commons and Buffalo Creek Watershed

The fall *Linn Log* briefly discussed the Conservancy's work with Union County to protect and maintain the 150 acres designated as open space in the business/industry park, known as Great Steam Commons, planned for northern Union County. The fall deadline to apply for Key '93 grant monies toward purchase of the property did not permit sufficient time to develop the necessary application. This does not preclude us from pursuing acquisition of the space through Key '93 in the future. We'll keep members posted on progress.

There is additional information to report on the rechanneling of Buffalo Creek at the Hassenplug covered bridge in Mifflinburg. A team of consultants working for the Union County Planning Commission has just completed a very thorough review of the Buffalo Creek watershed. It was executed for the county by RKR Hess Associates, Engineer Consultants of East Stroudsburg and submitted to borough and township officials in impacted areas. Shawn McLaughlin of the planning staff presented a copy of the full report and an executive summary to the Conservancy and these are available to members for review. One specific area addressed is the area by the Hassenplug bridge where the Conservancy has worked for an alternative to the proposed rechannelization. A plan submitted by the consultants calls for *no* rechannelization and instead proposes an overflow channel as well as the creation of a wetlands area on the west side of the bridge. Members of the Mifflinburg Planning Commission and the Mifflinburg Borough Council are being apprised of this alternative as *Linn Log* goes to press.

Amphitheatre Dedicated at Halfway Run Environmental Center

Jeannette Lasansky represented the Linn Conservancy at the October 10th dedication of the new amphitheatre at Raymond B. Winter State Park's Halfway Run Environmental Learning Center. The amphitheatre is located directly behind the Center which is a mile north of Route 192 and east of the park's main parking lot. (After leaving Route 192, visitors make an immediate left and travel a couple of miles staying on the macadam road to the Center).

The Edna Sheary Trust grant to the Conservancy paid for construction of the amphitheatre as well as for more than \$20,000 of additional equipment for the Center. Books, tapes, software, computers, games, kits, and more, all on nature and the environment, have been purchased. The material was selected by Mary Ann Bierly, the Center educator. Others in attendance included Ed Culver who took photographs for slides to be incorporated into the Linn Conservancy video which will debut this spring.

The events of the 10th included an autumn colors walk before the dedication and celebration picnic, and a program on Pennsylvania's birds of prey by Ed Reish of the Farragut Wildlife Rehabilitation Center presented at the new amphitheatre. The development of this amphitheatre is an excellent example of a project benefiting the general public resulting from a public/private partnership. The amphitheatre has been named the Sheary/Linn Amphitheatre in honor of the partnership that made it possible.

Montandon Marsh Cards Available

The Conservancy has recently created a special notecard series featuring drawings of four interesting denizens of the marsh: the Virginia Rail, Spicebush Butterfly, Spadefoot Toad, and Spicebush. The drawings were done by Jeanette Campbell of Lewisburg, the text by John Clark of Selinsgrove, and the design layout by Deb Slade of Lewisburg. The cards, printed in colored ink on a recycled paper stock, are available at Chris Snyder's Natural Foods Store just west of Lewisburg and at the Union County Historical Society office in the County Courthouse.

One of the benefits of membership is a 10% discount on all Conservancy-sold items ordered by mail or purchased at the office.

People Effect Change:

Memorial Fund Established in Honor of Richard L. Brown *by Jeannette Lasansky*

As the first President of the Merrill W. Linn Conservancy, it was my pleasure to work with Richard Brown. He was a quiet and steady influence in the formative years of the Conservancy and served our group and area well. Richard was the driving force behind our first trail that skirts the Mohn Mill vernal ponds in the northwesternmost part of Union County -- by Sand Run Lodge. He trained members of the local Joseph Priestly Unitarian Fellowship that has since maintained the Linn Trail for the Conservancy. Richard also worked on the layout of the Koons Trail in Mifflinburg and helped maintain the Dale's Ridge Trail. Later he served as Secretary of the Conservancy's Board of

Directors. We missed his concise and meticulous minutes when Richard resigned to give more time to helping his wife, Charlotte. We tried to keep in touch. Our last contact was a year ago when he and Charlotte gave to the Montandon Marsh campaign, a project about which Richard had helped to educate township officials when it was in its infancy. He passed away this fall and we are honored to be selected to receive memorial gifts on his behalf.

Richard owned and operated Brown's Greenhouse in Montandon for many years. After graduating from Loganton High School and Lock Haven College, Richard studied agriculture at Penn State and horticulture at Cornell. He was a member of Mid-States Trail Association, the Seven Mountains Audubon Society and the Sierra Club among other groups.

Those giving to the memorial fund include to date: Lois Yeager Burgess, Betty Yeager Kurtz, Molly Brown, June and Preston Hoyle, Jeannette and William Lasansky, Paul & Leesa Mack, Anna Hull & family, John & Mary Hills, Carol Shoefeldt, and Roy Fontaine.

Bequests Can Aid the Conservancy

The successes of the Merrill Linn Conservancy are due to the generosity of those individuals, families and businesses that have supported Conservancy endeavors through their volunteer work, generous gifts and conservation easements. The Conservancy also encourages members to support its work by including us in your estate plan. If you have already included such a provision in your will or trust, please let us know so that we may express our appreciation. If you are considering inclusion of the Conservancy in your estate plan, we would be happy to provide you with sample language, keeping in mind that all calls or contacts will be held in the strictest of confidence. For more information or answers to any questions, call the office at (570) 524-8666 or write: Merrill W. Linn Land and Waterways Conservancy, P.O. Box 501, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

Conservancy President Honored

At a dinner on November 12, 1998, the Chesapeake Bay Commission presented it's Salute to Excellence award to Betsy Quant, with the citation as follows:

"for her long-standing dedication to river restoration and the promotion of community watershed initiatives. Through her leadership with the Merrill W. Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy, she has heightened interest and promoted a sense of ownership for local and regional water resources by citizens at the community level."

Congratulations, Betsy!

Sigma Phi Epsilon's Big Weekend with the Conservancy

Over 180 man hours were donated this past September to three Conservancy projects by members of Bucknell University's Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. Conservancy members John Clark, John Snook, and Allan Quant supervised the students' work.

About 25 fraternity brothers began Saturday morning by cleaning up debris at our Montandon Marsh property. The wetlands complex was relieved of such items as old tires and construction materials that had accumulated over the years, particularly near the railroad tracks. Some of the students then went to help others already working at the Dale's Ridge Trail. Under the direction of Allan Quant, chief trail steward, they removed nearly one and one-half tons of debris that had been dumped over time at a quarry. This trail, located on private property but open to the public, is maintained by volunteers of the Linn Conservancy.

Fifteen other Sigma Phi Epsilon brothers were at work at a new stewardship site. This is in Limestone Township, Union County and required permission of the primary property owner and several of his neighbors as the group sought access to vernal ponds. Work was primarily directed to removing twenty cubic yards of construction debris (over five tons) from one pond. Such vernal ponds are small depressions, formed over limestone, that gather water from snow run-off and spring rains and gradually recede during the year. These depressions are important since they play a significant role in affecting water quality and aquifer recharge. For woodland animals, the ponds offer unique breeding and feeding habitat away from streams.

Additional debris removal at the Limestone Township site is still required as the group was only able to remove about half of what was present. In addition, considerable coal ash remains and the Conservancy is seeking the contribution of a back hoe and operator for about two hours. Please call 524-8666 if you are interested in helping out. The Conservancy is still seeking members or other volunteers who can supply a pickup truck and driver for weekend work.

We thank all who have been involved. Todd Gleason was Sigma Phi Epsilon's philanthropy chair in 1998 and we look forward to working with Steve Cassaleggio, the new chair, in 1999.

1990s Bring Surge in Land Conservation As Land Trusts Attract Additional Support

The 1998 *National Land Trust Census* released recently by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) reported a 135 percent increase (to 4.7 million acres) in the amount of open space conserved since 1988, capping a decade of dramatic growth for nonprofit local and regional land trusts. Nationally, land trusts report more than one million supporters and 50,000 active volunteers. In Union County and upper Northumberland County, the Linn Conservancy acts as such a land trust.

"The 1990s has been a decade of destiny for the country's land trusts," observed LTA President Jean Hocker. "The results underscore the central role of community-based land trusts in saving the face of America just as the debate about sprawl and the unremitting loss of green space has intensified across the country."

Land trusts are non-profit, non-governmental organizations with a primary mission to conserve land, mostly by purchase or through accepting donations and conservation easements.

Other major findings of the *1998 National Land Trust Census* are:

- As of 1998, 1,213 local and regional land trusts operate across the country, a 63 percent increase over the 743 tallied by the 1988 National Land Trust Census.
- More than 1.3 million acres have been protected by conservation easements, a stunning 377 percent increase over acreage similarly protected as of 1988.

"The popularity of land trusts has skyrocketed over the past decade for two reasons," said Jean Hocker. "First, people realize that open land is a finite resource that, once lost, can never be regained. Second, people have discovered that, through land trusts, they can make a direct, lasting difference in the community they live in and the world they will leave to their children and grandchildren."

The open space protected, larger than the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined, includes family farms and ranches, trails and scenic views, forests and natural lands, wetlands and wildlife habitat. Nearly 80 percent of local and regional land trusts maintain land for public recreation, and three out of four provide environmental education.

New Members Help Linn Conservancy Meet Its Goals

We have enclosed the Conservancy membership list for those who live in the area. We send it along so that you can help us grow. If every member secured just one friend or family to join, what a growth spurt the Conservancy would experience! Look over the list to see if friends who might be interested in the Conservancy are members. If not, please tell them about the organization - what it does and has done - and consider using the membership envelope for that purpose. In this way you can help us grow. (Please note that if "Dues are due" has been stamped at the bottom of the last page, you will also find an envelope included for that purpose.) Thank you!

Note the list of charter businesses and corporations which support the Linn Conservancy. We appreciate their public support of our group.

New individual and family members since the fall *Linn Log* are:

Katherine Hannaford
Josh Muchler
Peggy Lauver
William and Ruth Basom

New business members are:
Leeser's Shoe Store in Milton
Dr. Julie A. Barna

Briefs:

Thanks to Chris and Neal Woodruff who hosted a pot luck dinner for board members at their cabin in Weikert. It was a good opportunity to relax with some who always seem to be at work.

Thanks to those who helped monitor as well as manage the Dale's Ridge Trail this past summer and fall: in June and July, the Turbotville Zion Lutheran Boy Scout Troop under the leadership of Albert Mabus that included Lance Mabus, Jeff Dauberman, Barry Rider Jr. and Sr.; later in July and August, Lewisburg Cub Scout Pack 3538 under the leadership of Tom Duck that included three Cub Scouts, four parents and a sibling; in September, Joanne and Allen Schweinsburg; in October, Pete and Allen Macky, Cara Fisher and Tom and Jeff Duck; and in November, Dave Hafer.

Thanks to Warren Abrahamson, Owen Anderson, Ed Culver, Geoff Goodenow, and Sue Taylor for additional slide work for our forthcoming video on the Conservancy.

Thanks to Judy Peeler, Judy and Owen Anderson, Roy Swayze, and Arden and Ruth Miller for trail maintenance at the Linn Trail in the northwesternmost part of the county.

Thanks to Bill Deitrick from the Union County Conservation District and John Clark for updating information in the Conservancy's Ag Preservation pamphlet and to John Clark for printing a new supply.

Thanks to Wayne McDiffett and Warren Abrahamson for maintaining the Shamokin Mountain Trail and for keeping that trail brochure in stock.

Thanks to Dick Nickelsen for leading a fall educational walk for about a dozen participants on Dale's Ridge Trail. Wayne McDiffett's walk was rained out, unfortunately, but we will try again next fall to undertake the final season in a three part series on the Shamokin Mountain Trail.

Thanks to Pete and Allen Macky, Joanne Reilly and Geoff Goodenow for conducting our fall adopt-a-highway cleanup.

Thanks to Rob Cook and Kathy Graham for assistance to the Conservancy on the matter of receiving bequests.

Thanks to Nancy Curran who continues to make new business sponsor certificates. Perhaps you have seen a certificate on display at one of the Conservancy's 24 business and corporate sponsors.

Thanks to John Gardner at the Lewisburg Studio for taking the board's portrait for the video and providing other photographic assists.

Thanks to Jeanette Campbell for allowing us to use the Montandon Marsh drawings for the notecard series.

Thanks to life members Wayne McDiffett, Pete Macky, Diana Lasansky, Ann Gelnett, Dr. Robert Bernstein, Rev. William Weary, Elva Reitz, Barbara Zeiders and Geoff Goodenow for additional financial support at the end of 1998.

If you see a red DUES ARE DUE stamped here, it means exactly that. Dues are \$35 for an individual, \$50 for a family, \$100 for a Contributor, \$250 for a Sponsor, \$500 for a Steward, \$1,000 for a Patron, and \$5,000 for a Benefactor. Please help us maintain our strength by renewing soon. Also, if you have an upcoming address change, please notify the Conservancy office. We want to be sure that you get your copy of the *Linn Log* promptly and efficiently.