

Linn Log

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

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Winter 2002

Coming Events:

Snowshoe Nature Walk on Thursday, February 7th

Pre-registration is required for a snow shoe demonstration and nature walk at the Halfway Run Environmental Center, RB Winter State Park that will start at 10 AM and last about 2 hours. There will be some snow shoes available or bring your own. Call 966-1455 to pre-register.

Snowfest at the Halfway Run Environmental Center on February 10th

Break free of the winter doldrums! Join us at R. B. Winter State Park's fifth annual Snowfest on Sunday, February 10. Snowy fun for all will be featured from noon to 4 p.m. Visitors can try out such winter activities as snow volleyball, broomball, skating, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, sledding, and winter mountain biking. Compete for prizes in the snow person fashion contest or watch ice cutting as it was done on Halfway Lake during the late 1930s. Children can make snow art or have their faces painted with wintry designs. If you prefer viewing the frozen landscape of R. B. Winter from a warmer perspective, there are indoor programs, too. Story time by the fireplace, close up looks at animal adaptations, lectures on winter survival skills, snowmobile safety, and more will be presented at the Halfway Run Environmental Learning Center. The Linn Conservancy will be hosting a booth there.

Short easy walks to highlight winter's resident birds are also planned. A concession stand will provide hot refreshments, or you can pack your own picnic. There will also be a silent auction, a session on wild game cooking, and search and rescue dogs on site. Most programs are free of charge; some will require you to bring your own equipment.

Hopefully there will be snow — but Snowfest will go on rain or shine! 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 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The Environmental Learning Center is offering a myriad of programs throughout the winter and early spring months. For information on the center's many programs for school-age children, call the number mentioned above. Much of the interior of the Environmental Learning Center's equipment and display materials as well as the materials to build the amphitheater were provided to the center by the Linn Conservancy through two successful Sheary grants.

February 16th Keystone Coldwater Conference

The next Keystone Coldwater Conference will be held at State College. Geoff Goodenow, Joe Southerton and Jeannette Lasansky have attended the all-day event in recent years and have found the conferences very worthwhile. Elizabeth Sterling, who teaches science at the Lewisburg High School, will be attending on behalf of the Conservancy. If you are interested in going please let the Conservancy office know by February 3rd. The overall thrust this year will be "Headwater Habitats: The Importance of Native Plant & Animal Diversity." More can be learned about the session at www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/coldwaterconservation. There is a registration fee of \$25 that includes lunch. The Conservancy will provide transportation.

Childrens' Literature and Environmental Education Workshop on Friday, February 22

This workshop is for class room teachers, home educators, and youth leaders interested in blending in literature and nature-oriented studies. It will taught from 10 A.M.-2 P.M. at the Union County Library by Jane Reichenbach, the childrens' librarian and Mary Ann Bierly, environmental education specialist at RB Winter State Park. Pre-registration is required. Please call 966-1455.

Thursday, February 28th, Wildlife Session on Animals that Live Under the Ice and Snow

From 10 A.M. to noon, this program will be offered at the Halfway Run Environmental Center, RB Winter State Park for those pre-registered. Call 966-1455 for more information. The program is geared from 9 year-olds to adults.

Future Program on the Natural Areas Inventory in Northumberland County

Aura Stauffer from the Science Office of The Nature Conservancy will soon be presenting a program on Northumberland County's Natural Diversity Inventory. The inventory was financially supported by the Linn Conservancy through its own funds and ones secured by the Conservancy from two groups: the Cora Brooks Foundation and a Huplits Grant of the Sierra Club.

The Natural Conservancy has completed most of its field work on Northumberland County and is presently compiling, mapping and writing a draft of the report set for February. There will be some limited field work in the spring to catch a few species and sites the staff could not get to in 2001. The final report is set for delivery by June 30.

A date for a presentation for our members and interested members of the public is currently being arranged.

Spring walks/events are now being planned by the Conservancy's Public Awareness Committee. There are some dates you can put on your calendars already. May 5th will be a Sunday afternoon Open House at the Dale/Walker House and the Dale's Ridge Trail and Wednesday, May 8th is the Conservancy's Annual Dinner. If there is something you would particularly like to see us do please do not hesitate to ask.

Our Environment Matters:

Update on Buffalo Creek Watershed: Historically What ?, Where ? and What Next ?

The watershed of Union County's Buffalo Creek was the subject of a meeting attended by forty people on October 23rd at Mifflinburg High School. Sponsored by the Conservancy, this public forum offered an opportunity to learn about the to voice questions and problems relating to it, and to begin planning for its restoration and preservation. The meeting supported by the Union County Planning Commission and the Union County Conservation District.

After a welcome and introduction of the scope of the evening's activities by Neal Woodruff, Conservancy Board member, the group was addressed by Joan Sattler, regional watershed coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). She spoke to the need for attention to the watershed. There is, throughout the state, she said, a concerted movement for protection of watersheds. It has come into being because two centuries of life and work in Pennsylvania have left its natural water supplies polluted, sometimes beyond any use. The chief sources of pollution are mine drainage, agricultural runoff, and sedimentation. To rectify that result would require many billions of dollars, far more than the state can muster for such a project. Yet it is absolutely necessary. So the state is encouraging and supporting a large number of local watershed restoration groups staffed chiefly by concerned volunteers.

The Linn Conservancy has received a \$5,000 Growing Greener grant to support the establishment of such a volunteer watershed protection group for Buffalo Creek. Its watershed is the largest in Union County, draining 42% of its area and yielding an important tributary of the Susquehanna River.

Shawn McLaughlin, Director of the Union County Planning Department, offered a number of facts about the watershed, facts relating to the uses made of the stream itself and the activities carried on in the watershed. Covering 134 square miles in the central part of the county, the stream flows through more than half its municipalities, including both its boroughs. Sixty percent of the watershed is forested. The stream and its tributaries are the source of much of the county's public water supply. The stream and its tributaries also hold cold water fisheries, in some of which there are native trout. About a third of Buffalo Creek's watershed is in agricultural production. One fact that makes restoration and protection of the watershed critical for the future is that parts of it have recently experienced decisive growth of population. New people and new enterprises will need good water and places for recreation.

Ted Retallak, Manager of the Union County Conservation District, filled in some history of the watershed area, from the indigenous native Americans down to the present, and offered help and support to anyone wanting to preserve and fence land adjoining the creek. Carl Kirby, Chairman of the Bucknell Geology Department and a board member of the Linn Conservancy, gave an account of an extensive study of the creek done in 1998 by a technical consulting group for the U. S. Corps of Engineers. Though not exhaustive, it provides a head start for further study and action by pinpointing problem locations along the length of the creek.

After these presentations, those attending divided into small groups to discuss and list questions for future exploration and to suggest actions needed to preserve the watershed. Breakout session leaders were: Owen Anderson, Shawn McLaughlin, Jeff Bowers, and Ted Retallak.

A second public meeting was held on November 14th at the Mifflinburg Middle School. At that meeting Chuck Chapman from Fishing Creek Watershed Association, located in northern Columbia and four other counties, spoke about that group's work since 1998. Those in attendance learned tips on what makes a successful watershed initiative. A third public meeting was held on January 15th, again in Mifflinburg and it focused on organizational issues and structure with a short introductory program by Penn State Extension Service agent, Norm Conrad, on fly fishing in local streams. **The fourth public meeting will be in mid-March.**

If you would like to be on a mailing list for future meetings please call 524-8666 or write conserve@ptd.net. All who are even just curious are welcome to attend as this project takes shape.

CREP on Sections of the Walker Property

The Linn Conservancy holds a conservation easement on the 137-acre farm of the late Rosemary and Charlie Walker in Buffalo Township. As part of the easement, the Conservancy has built and maintains a two-to-three-mile walking trail along Buffalo Creek's riparian corridor and on the ridge itself. It is one of the area's most used walking trails.

Charlie Walker died late last December and since June the new owner of the property has been the Union County Historical Society. The Society has undertaken a capital campaign to make needed improvements to the 1793 limestone farmhouse and ready it for public use. Along with Seven Mountains Audubon, the Conservancy has an agreement with the UCHS to share certain public use areas at the house: a general public meeting room and a public exhibition area on the first floor and an office and a board meeting room/large work area on the second floor. The UCHS will have its collections in storage and on display at the house and Seven Mountains Audubon Society may be building a nature study center at the site. It is the plan to have certain parts functioning for the public in the spring of 2002.

One of the first things the Society did was to put select fields in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for restoring farmland wildlife habitat and improving conservation methods. Two grass filter strips or waterways will be implemented next spring: one along Strawbridge Road and the other in a section of a field that drains directly into the creek. Two other fields will be planted in native warm season grasses and

legumes and they will be mowed once a year after birds' nesting season. The bulk of the farming fields will be cultivated by Leroy Zimmerman, a Mennonite neighbor, who will be doing so for his third year in the spring 2002.

Pennsylvania's goal is to have 100,000 acres in CREP and the emphasis is to enroll acreage in the south central, and southeastern parts of the state which are part of the watershed of the Chesapeake Bay. To date there are over 50,000 acres enrolled in the one-year-old program and 1,777 are in Union County. Details on the program can be gotten from Russ Keiffer at the Union County Conservation District's office.

Know Your Woods *By Dr. Robert S. Hansen, Penn State Cooperative Extension Forester*

One of the most important things you can do as a forest landowner is to become familiar with your woods. Knowing your woods will help you be aware of present conditions and alert you to factors that may warrant action. This information will enable you to make better management decisions, and active management is a key to maintaining a healthy, productive forest now and in the future.

How can you become familiar with your woods? Probably the most basic and enjoyable way is to walk your property. As you walk, notice the environments in your forest. Different trees prefer different environments. For example, the growing conditions in a shady ravine might favor hemlock trees, while a ridge-top supports oaks, and a recently cut or disturbed area favors aspen and cherry trees.

One good way to keep track of the different tree communities is to mark them on a map. Start by drawing your property boundaries on the map, and then carry it with you when you walk. (For information about obtaining and using maps, see the resources at the end of this article.)

While you are walking, note the size and condition of your trees. Do they look healthy, or do they show sign of stress-such as rot, unusual growths, or leaf dieback?

As you are walking, carefully observe the forest floor. What is happening there will largely determine your forest's future. Are there many tree seedlings? If not, why not? White-tailed deer may be browsing them. Look closely for chewed twigs. If deer are over browsing your forest or ferns blanket the ground, young trees may have difficulty establishing a new forest. You may need to take action to control deer or ferns to ensure the long-term health of your forest.

Look for wildflowers and shrub. Are there many different kinds, or do just a few dominate? Certain undesirable plants are invading Pennsylvania forests and crowding out the native species, which are important for wildlife. To maintain a healthy forest, you may need to take steps to control these harmful species.

In addition to observing vegetation, note the physical characteristics of your woods. Are there any streams, seeps, or wetlands? These wet areas often require special management considerations. They are important because they often provide food (green plants and insects) and water for wildlife throughout the year.

What type of wildlife activity do you notice? Do you see many deer, grouse, salamanders, rabbits, toads, songbirds, foxes, or other wildlife on your walks? Be aware of insect activity, such as defoliation from gypsy moths, forest tent caterpillars, or other insects. Extensive and repeated damage from insects may force you to modify your objectives and management techniques.

Keeping a diary of what you observe on your walks will help you notice changes taking place in your wood lot. In addition to the diary, consider keeping records of all of your forest management activities. Records are useful for reporting management expenses and revenues for tax purposes. Furthermore, since forests require long-range planning, records enable you to document the history of your land.

People, Businesses, and Organizations Affect Change:

Second Round on Conservancy Environmental Education Grants

The Conservancy presented its first two environmental education awards last May. The awards are given in the name of the late John G. Clark of Selinsgrove. John was a botanist respected for his tireless work identifying and protecting special plants and their habitats in this region of Central Pennsylvania and he was a board member and past president of the Linn Conservancy.

A new application period for the John G. Clark Environmental Education Grant began October 1, 2001 with a deadline of January 15, 2002. The Conservancy's Public Awareness Committee will announce the award recipient(s) in the spring *Linn Log*. To be put on a list to receive an application in the future, write the Conservancy P.O. Box 501, Lewisburg, PA 17837 or to conserve@ptd.net.

Varied Work Efforts at the Dale/Walker Property

There has been much activity on the Dale's Ridge Trail over the last year and it is time to highlight the activities as well as those working on the different projects. According to chief trail steward and Conservancy board member, Rolf Helbig:

Ryan Gable, as part of an Eagle Scout project with Harry Huff, scout leader of Boy Scout Troop #512, sanded, washed and stained the white parking lot fence while Conservancy member and August adopt-a-month trail steward, David Goehring repainted the trail kiosk.

Another Eagle Scout project conducted by Robbie Rapp under Bob Rapp, Boy Scout Troop #538 was a step design at the base of the ridge switchback. This was much needed. Donations for this project came from several area businesses: crushed stone from Eastern Industries, metal rebar from Martin Steel of Mifflinburg, and a load of wood chips came from Larry Hackenberg's Tree Service. Read more about this project in the Thank you section that follows.

Also, Bob and Sue Rapp diverted the trail near the north power line to by pass a dangerous spot on that part of the trail with the assistance of some Lewisburg High School students.

Bill Bastian repainted all the blue blazes and Annick and Rolf Helbig did a myriad of tasks.

Eastern Industries did gratis work and donated materials for the parking lot and the area of the road back near the switchback that was in desperate need of fill.

Geoff Goodenow and Rolf conducted the annual conservation easement review.

Monthly trail stewards in addition to the Rapps were Boy Scout Troop #538, 9th Grade Lewisburg High School Students, Pete and Allen Mackey, Tom and Jeff Duck, Dave Hafer, Allen Schweinsberg, and David Goehring. If you or a group you are involved with is interested in adopting Dale's Ridge or the Koons Trail in Mifflinburg for a month next spring/summer/fall please let the office know. Both trails are heavily used and in very good shape thanks to these volunteers and the chief trail steward, Rolf Helbig.

Conservancy Column Appears in the Item

Starting in August, and appearing in alternating months, the Linn Conservancy and the Seven Mountains Audubon Society will be presenting columns on local environmental issues in the *Daily Item*. Members Neal Woodruff and Jeannette Lasansky have written the first two columns for the Conservancy and we are looking to members who like to write to consider doing so. In wanting to know more please contact the office at conserve@ptd.net or call 524-8666. March then May are our next slots for front page coverage on the third Sunday in the environmental section of the *Item*. The column appears in the third Sunday edition of each month.

Making Tracks by Katie Scheib

I've struggled with writing this column since the events of September 11. Many facets of life have been turned upside-down. However, this is not the first time I've felt overwhelmed by events beyond my control and once again I turn to a piece of sage wisdom delivered to me long ago--chase a small corner of the world, focus on it and do the best you can.

This is my small corner.

I am a financial planner and I specialize in a type of investing known as Socially Responsible Investing (SRI). SRI has three key components: social screening, shareholder activism, and community investing.

Social screening involves the active avoidance or screening out of companies that make products or conduct business contrary to the investor's ethical beliefs. Positive screens are used to select companies that make a favorable contribution to society and the Earth.

Shareholder activism involves taking a more active role in the management of the company. Many people do not realize that owning stock, including mutual funds - makes them an OWNER of the actual company and therefore a partner in the actions of the company - good and bad.

Community loan funds provide low-cost loans to low-income recipients, trusts designed to purchase public land for preservation purposes, natural gas drilling operations and social venture capital projects.

People like ourselves, when stockholders, can change policies that effect our environment and I like that. For instance, within the last decade shareholder activism convinced Home Depot to no longer sell old-forest timber.

In addition Home Depot formed an alliance with an alternative energy company was created to sell solar energy systems for residential/commercial buildings.

On a broader perspective, SRI can be used to address most values-based beliefs including (but not limited to) energy, animal testing, education, nuclear power, etc. No matter what an investor, such as myself or yourself, likes or dislikes, believes in and/or supports there most likely is a mutual fund and/or portfolio money manager that can match those values.

As a financial planner I would be remiss in my fiduciary responsibilities if I counseled clients to participate in SRI simply because it was "the right thing to do." SRI is also a smart business move and has proven itself via competitive rates of return. Socially responsible companies are sustainable businesses. They are less likely to be sued to clean-up environmental disasters (remember Exxon and the Valdez oil spill?), lose class-action labor/wage/discrimination or health related lawsuits (tobacco) or spend billions of dollars in advertising to overcome negative publicity. Less capital outlay means a better chance at a positive bottom line (profits) and for many investors, regardless of beliefs, it's the bottom line that counts.

Is Socially Responsible Investing only a small step to a cleaner environment and a sustainable global economy? Perhaps, but it is a positive step. And those steps can turn into a stampede as we the people, the investors that own the companies, become aware of our responsibilities and the power to choose. I like that feeling.

In closing, I challenge you to take a moment to focus on this small corner of the world and do the best you can. Review your IRA/retirement and investment accounts and know what you own.

Katie Scheib, a member of the Linn Conservancy.

WEB Site

The Conservancy is working on our web site with Emily Blair, former resident of Lewisburg and a graduate of Lewisburg High School, Wesleyan College, and the University of Wisconsin where she earned an MFA in graphic design. She has been head of the digital imaging area in the Fine Arts Department at Washington State University the past two years. Emily has taught all levels of digital imaging, including print and web design. With her professional help we plan to have site up and running in the spring. We will be found at www.LinnConservancy.org.

Moving Day April 1st: Conservancy Office to Open at the Dale/Walker House

The Conservancy will be occupying its own office at the Dale/Walker house this spring. Since we have shared office space with the Union County Historical Society since our inception we have not needed to buy office furnishings which we do now. When the Society original computer died we offered to buy a replacement computer, printer, and Zip drive and these will go with us when we make the move. Everything else we need to get: from a work station and chair, some file cabinets, lighting, and phone to post-it pads, staples, and more. You get the picture. Some members have given money designated for establishing the office and that is appreciated. We are looking to collect another \$850 to get what is needed and would appreciate your help if you are able to give it. When we have our open house on May 5th everyone will be able to see our new home.

If you have any of the following items or would like to send us a gift certificate from Wagner's Stationery, Phil will fill at competitive prices the following items:

Scotch tape dispenser and tape	stapler/staples	electric 3-hole punch
paper clips	large clips	pens
post-its	memo pads	high lighters
colored paper stock	manila envelopes	Xerox paper
an <i>American Heritage Dictionary</i>	Zip discs	scissors
	gram scale	calculator
	and file cabinet	file folders

Renewing Members Help Linn Conservancy Meet Its Goals

This has been a time of stress for non-profit organizations such as the Conservancy as a result both of a soft economy and the events of September 11th. At all times, membership support through renewals is especially appreciated as are those additional gifts individuals and businesses are able to make. Now, more than ever, these gifts have meaning as we strive to maintain what is important to us all.

Thanks to all who have renewed already for 2002 and those who supported the quilt fundraiser.

Thanks to members: Preston & June Hoyle, Barbara Zeiders, Andy Mack, Sue & Tom Travis, and the Lasanskys who recently made additional donations to our "new office" fund.

Also thanks for additional giving to the Conservancy through gifts or an increase in membership level for 2002 has come from the following members: Charles Hartung, Linda Minimum, Tom & Marge Duck, John & Judy Goodenow, Preston & Margaret Davis, Peter Matson, the Macky family, Jack & Joan Harclerode, Betty Koons, Jeff Coup, Wayne McDiffett, Geoff Goodenow, Robert Hamm, Donna Kling, Joseph Keller, Jeff Bowers, Jean Ther-Hackett, Ray Goehring, Phoebe Oshirack, Pauline Fletcher, Deborah Torok, Janet & Albert Stush, Elva Reitz, Judy Peeler, Peter Judge, Marjorie Heinzelman, Cindy Shively, Victoria Johnson, Allan & Ann Grundstrom, William & Ruth Bascom, Rik & Pam Paulsen, Richard Ellis, and Philip Sosland.

Welcome to new member: Ellsworth Harris, and Lisa-Baker-Taylor & John Taylor. Both new members have come as gift memberships.

The Conservancy would like to thank Darinda, Walter & Pat Fisher of Lewisburg for a major gift to the land acquisition fund in memory of their dear friend, William Mahalsky who died on October 20, 2001.

In Brief . . .

Conservancy Board members attended professional conferences or represented the Conservancy at environmental meetings last fall: Roger Curran went to a DEP meeting in State College while Neal Woodruff and John Fernsler attended the Pennsylvania Land Trust Alliance (PaLTA) regional meeting, also at State College

Thanks to Wayne McDiffett and Joe Southerton who conducted the annual conservation easement review on the Koons property.

Thanks to members, Carl Kirby, Geoff Goodenow, Joe Southerton, and Lettie Davis, who organized or led fall events.

Thanks to Vivian Miller, Judy Becker, and Dave & Vicki Helbig for preparing the quilt fundraising membership mailing. Thanks to those who manned or prepared our booth at Christkindl and sold those final \$630 worth of raffle tickets: Allen Schweinsberg, Roger & Nancy Curran, Rolf, Bernan Christopher, & Annick Helbig, Teri MacBride, Bob Morris, Sue Taylor, William & Jeannette Lasansky, Ross & Sue Smoker, Barbara Allison, Lettie Davis, Margaret Moyer, June Hoyle, Judy Peeler, Dahle & Shirley Bingaman, Pete & Nancy Macky, John & Joan Fernsler. The winning quilt ticket was drawn on December 14th in the lobby of the Union County Courthouse and belonged to Dorothy Knauss of Mifflinburg. Special thanks, of course, to Mary Koons who designed and donated the wonderful quilt. We raised nearly \$2,300 from the raffle.

Thanks to members Neal Woodruff, Carl Kirby, Owen Anderson, Luke Miller, Joe Southerton, Allen Grundstrom, Allan Grundstrom, Lettie Davis, Jeff Bowers, and Geoff Goodenow for their continuing work on the Buffalo Creek Watershed Group meetings

Thanks to Dave and Vicki Heberlig and Judy Becker who prepared the mailing of the current *Linn Log*.

Thanks to Joanne Reilly, Kathy Rowe, Tom & Jacqueline Beck who helped Geoff Goodenow clean the Conservancy's Adopt-a-Road segment along Penns' Creek in Limestone Township and to Joe Keller, Cindy Shively, Rolf, Annick and Bernon Helbig, who help Geoff in October. The 2002 Adopt-a-Road dates are the Sunday afternoons of April 7, June 2, August 25, and October 20. Please contact Geoff Goodenow at 523-025 if you are interested in helping out.

Thank you Robbie and Rob Rapp for a project well done at the Dale's Ridge Trail. Due to the increased foot traffic on the trail, roots from the trees and the base of the switch back were becoming exposed; not a good situation for the roots or the hikers. As a result of one of the Eagle Scouts summer projects on the trail this problem was solved. Robbie Rapp with Boy Scout Troop #538, and with the assistance of Robbie's father Bob, an engineer, installed a step system that extends from the former problem area to the first turn in the switch back. Using recycled rail road ties from New York, the ties were cut, pre drilled, and set on crushed limestone and finally secured by rebar; wood chips were then spread in between the steps. When looking at the step system from the base of the switch back you will notice a slight circular curve telling you that this was a well thought out design.

Thank you to Neal Woodruff who has been the Conservancy's representative to the Great Stream Common's Open Space and Housing Committee and to Pat Longley who has occasionally been a sub for Neal.

Please Note: Your dues for this year are due if there is a red stamp here; if so, 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 support in the past! Giving to the Linn Conservancy makes a difference that matters. Membership support is our major financial underpinning.