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Linn Log

SPRING 2021



PHOTO: GEOFF GOODENOW

The Value of Wild Places

Laura Brenner, *Communications Coordinator of the Lancaster Farmland Trust.*

A year ago, when civilized society closed its doors, nature opened a window. For many of us, it's a window we've climbed through plenty of times before "pandemic" became common vernacular. For others, it was a portal to a new world, covered in cinnamon ferns and steep, rocky trails. The result — we are all more aware of the valuable role nature plays in our wellbeing.

But it's more than proverbial value — there's a dollar amount related to protecting these wild places. When we invest in natural land protection, those dollars ricochet into other community benefits. Access to recreation areas, connecting migratory wildlife trails, and preserving historically significant biological and geological sites, boost our local economy and provide a high quality of life.

The Merrill Linn Conservancy has protected more than 1,500 acres across 17 properties. These lands are home to rare species of plants and animals, precious wetlands, and incredible vistas. As humans, we are just one of the constituents that these protected lands serve, yet we can have the most significant impact on these natural places' future if we're willing to invest in them today.

Linn Log

Newsletter of the Merrill W. Linn
Land & Waterways Conservancy

Mission of the Merrill W. Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy

To preserve and protect significant ecological sites in Union, upper Northumberland, and contiguous counties and to educate the public on conservation issues critical to the health of our environment.

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The Merrill W. Linn Land and Waterways Conservancy was founded in April of 1988 in memory of Merrill W. Linn, a local attorney and avid outdoorsman who spent much of his life exploring the woods, streams, fields, and byways surrounding his native Lewisburg, and sharing that experience and knowledge with others.

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for your calendar

Sunday, April 25, Plein Air event sponsored by Lewisburg Arts Council, Merrill Linn Conservancy and Union County Historical Society at Dale-Engle-Walker and Koons Trail properties (see page 6 for details.) **Seven Mountains Audubon Society,** Programs take place on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7 pm. Currently available by Zoom. Please contact Kay Cramer, president, at falconrider1@gmail.com, for the zoom invitation and link.

Wednesday, April 21, Dr. George P. Chamuris, Professor Emeritus, Biological and Allied Health Sciences, Bloomsburg University, will present a program on the flora of Rickett's Glen State Park with overview of his project investigating the plants and associated species found in waterfall-rich habitat in Montour County.

Wednesday, May 19, Allen Schweinsburg, past president and highly experienced birder, branched out from birds many years ago into studying butterflies. He will present a program on Pennsylvania Butterflies with images from the familiar to the obscure, such as the Leonard's skipper and will have information on habits, season, distribution, and behavior.

CFC Programming, Banquet on Hold
Due to COVID, the Conservancy has again decided to hold off offering a full schedule of events for our annual Caring for Communities programming and to postpone our annual banquet usually held in early May. Please watch for announcements about events as we feel comfortable in offering them. We are hopeful as well that we might be able to have our banquet in early fall.

TCPA Donates \$9,000+ To Conservancy

The Turtle Creek Park Association (TCPA) donated \$9,257 to the Conservancy earlier this year. The check was presented at the Dale's Ridge trailhead (See photo right) as one of the final steps in the dissolution of the park association.

TCPA was formed in 2016 to support the much-loved Turtle Creek dog park at Furnace and Supplee Mill Roads in East Buffalo Twp. In 2018, the owner of the 78-acre site sold the property; subsequently the park was closed and TCPA's mission ended. "Our board agreed that the Merrill Linn Conservancy, which shares many of our ideals, should receive the funds," said Char Gray, a TCPA board member.

TCPA board member and attorney Brianna Apfelbaum Kula, whose father, the late Michael Apfelbaum, conceived the idea for the dog park, said "Turtle Creek Park is near and dear to my family and it means a great deal to have the funds raised by



From left to right: Jeff Trop, Chad North, Brianna Apfelbaum Kula, Char Gray, Clare Kula, Geoff Goodenow, and Adrienne Gemberling.

passionate community volunteers go to similar efforts stewarded by the Merrill Linn Conservancy."

Conservancy president Jeff Trop said, "The Association's generous donation will foster the Conservancy's dual mission of educating the public and protecting local ecosystems. In particular, this donation will support the Conservancy's *Linking Landscapes* initiative, which maintains corridors of natural habitat that facilitate movement of plants and animals across the local landscape."

*Think a moment, all the restless yearnings and achievements
of the human brain are powered by the everyday miracle of the
green leaf.*

Hugh Wilson

President's Message: Conserve and Connect



Jeff Trop

Greetings. Linn Conservancy members, donors, and friends... As spring emerges, the Conservancy is excited to share momentum on our conservation and education efforts. In this issue we highlight additions to our conserved lands, pay tribute to two longtime members who played a key role in the Conservancy

mission, and share new education initiatives.

Adding conservation easements like the new one contributed by Judy Marvin about are not just positive, they are **necessary** for the protection and recovery of native plants and animals. As humans consistently develop more land each year, natural habitats and the life they support become increasingly fragmented.

The Conservancy and its affiliate, Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance, are lessening these negative impacts by connecting and restoring protected lands via our *Linking Landscapes* initiative. Ideally located between Conservancy easements to the south (Abrahamson-Burnham-McDiffett property) and north (Dale-Walker-Engle property), the Marvin property helps connect the dots crucial for native plants and wildlife to thrive, despite a human-fragmented landscape in the face of climate change.

We celebrate long term protection of the Judy Marvin property as an important step in the Conservancy's ongoing work. But we cannot rest. There is still so much work to do, and not much time. Over the last 15 years, Pennsylvania developed more than one million acres of fields, open space, and

natural land, which equates to **9 acres per hour, every hour**. Think about precious farm fields and mountains in this area—those are land uses we are losing at alarming rates to more impervious surfaces like sidewalks, roadways, and buildings. With these increased rates of farm and forest loss, protecting important habitats and diversity of the organisms they support will require even higher levels of dedication to conservation locally and statewide.

Making progress on these fronts is challenging. Few folks have demonstrated such dedication as Wayne McDiffett and Ruth Burnham as part of the Linn Conservancy family to ensure future generations will forever be able to enjoy the natural resources they've worked hard to protect. As you'll learn in this issue, (See page 8.) Wayne and Ruth were vital in building the Conservancy and carrying out its mission over the past three decades. We will miss them dearly as they begin a new journey closer to their family in the Rockies.

As you enjoy nature the next few months – perhaps along Shamokin Mountain trail that Wayne and Ruth helped steward – please consider how you can help sustain their legacy via time or treasure. Donating to our *Endowment Fund* via a monetary gift or bequest will help the Conservancy secure our top need: additional paid staff. Volunteers will always be vital to carrying out our mission. But additional paid staff will help us more effectively protect and restore land, spread public awareness, and expand our volunteer and financial capacity. Working together, we can conserve and connect larger tracts of important habitat!

Jeff Trop, President

Conservancy Adds 60+ Acre Easement

Following many months of effort, the Linn Conservancy completed work on a conservation easement of 60+ acres on property owned by Judith Marvin in East Buffalo Twp., Union County. This acreage adds to 14+ acres of woodland and wetland that Judy had previously protected through the Conservancy. This new addition features open fields with soil types designated “of



statewide importance” in addition to a variety of woodland, meadow and wetland habitats that benefit a diversity of wildlife. The field of warm-season grasses and “Old Ben”, a c.275-year-old white oak, are exceptional features on the property.

Resource specific

conservation objectives include protection of surface and ground water quality; wildlife habitat in accord with our *Linking Landscapes* initiative; vegetative resources; soils of exceptionally high-quality; scenic open space within a growing municipality; and ecosystem services such as absorption of rainwater that might otherwise cause flooding and sequestering of carbon in plants and soils to help mitigate rising atmospheric carbon levels.

We are grateful to Judy for her concern for the environment and in promoting conservation efforts within East Buffalo Twp. Thanks to Allen Schweinsberg, Linn's site committee chairperson, who worked diligently with Judy to produce this protective agreement. Our thanks as well to Warren Abrahamson who assisted Allen with the property baseline survey and to Rob Jacob of Bucknell University for his expertise in identifying important boundaries within the site. The Conservancy now protects over 1500 acres by way of conservation easement or ownership.

Forest School Day Camp Offered At Dale-Engle-Walker Property

by Susan Chlebowski

The more high-tech our lives become, the more nature we need.

Richard Louv, author *Last Child in the Woods*

As schools were forced to shift to virtual learning due to the coronavirus pandemic, another group was immediately affected: student teachers. Even as schools reopened, the requirement to limit the number of people in the classroom meant that universities were challenged to find opportunities for teacher candidates to work directly with children, a requirement for graduation.

Recently, the Dale-Engle-Walker property became part of the solution to this challenge, serving as the ideal site for Forest School Day Camp, a new outdoor education program for homeschooled children ages 4-9 offered weekly on Thursdays. This community outreach program, offered to any interested family regardless of ability to pay, represents a collaboration between the Merrill Linn Conservancy, the Union County Historical Society, Bucknell University's Education Department, the Lewisburg Children's Museum, and outdoor educator Susan Chlebowski.

Forest School Day Camp is modeled after Scandinavian and UK Forest Schools, and the growing US model of "Forest Days," where each child spends a half day in the woods each week engaged in child-led, hands-on learning, play and skill building. Junior Bucknell education students serve as facilitators and have the opportunity to observe children in a setting that has shown to improve behavior, increase focus and concentration, and bring out skills and competencies that may not be observable in indoor settings. Teacher candidates will also have the opportunity to connect outdoor learning activities to state standards and required teacher preparation competencies. The short documentary *Best Day Ever*, profiling forest kindergartens in VT public schools, describes the model.

Forest School Day Camp also benefits local children who have limited opportunity to socialize and learn with other children during the pandemic. The program has been underway for a month, and the children have easily adapted to learning and playing in a fully outdoor experience that takes place in all types of weather. This model also reflects an alternate role of the teacher, one in which teachers step back and let children self-direct their play and learning through child-led activities based on the children's interests, curiosity and observations of the natural world.

The evidence-based methods (nature combined with child-led play and learning) used in this program reflect research that shows that these programs benefit children



in many ways, including improved holistic health (physical, mental, social, emotional) and improved confidence, independence, motivation, problem solving, and critical thinking. Learning outside also supports a child's complex sensory and motor needs, enhances cognitive and academic learning, and fosters lifelong respect and care for the natural world.

Across the country, outdoor educators and national organizations promoting outdoor learning have scaled up rapidly and openly shared resources to create outdoor classrooms and programs to bring students and teachers outside. Locally, the Forest School Day Camp at the Dale-Engle-Walker property is one example of cooperative, flexible problem solving within our community, creating a solution that brings safe play and learning to children and broadens the experience of student teachers, preparing them to be part of a growing worldwide movement to expand learning beyond the classroom walls.

Brush Fire at DRT

On blustery March 14, several area fire companies and DCNR's forestry division responded to a fire at Dale's Ridge. Crews confined the low burning flames to an approximated two acres at the west end of the ridge where the trail leads to overlook site 10.

The trail was closed for about two days while smoldering brush was extinguished and assessment could be done to assure user safety. The source of the fire is uncertain at this time. Taking an educational view of this event, as you walk through this burn area, compare and contrast emergence and growth of vegetation within and outside the scorched area throughout this spring and summer. You might make some very interesting observations. The Union County Historical Society (property owner) and Linn Conservancy are most grateful to all responders and thank them for their service.

Nature's Explorers Series:

Environmental education from diverse perspectives

This spring children, ages 5 and up, can experience the natural world from diverse entry points—art poetry, birds, bugs, plants, and more—at Nature's Explorers environmental education events to be held at the Dale-Engle-Walker property.

The Linn Conservancy, Bucknell University, and the Lewisburg Children's Museum are partnering to present the outdoor classroom programs drawing on noted Bucknell professors, such as Chris Martine, Mark Spiro, and Beth Capaldi, whose expertise in their individual disciplines will lead children to new ways of seeing and being in the natural world.

The concept for Nature's Explorers grew out of an Andrew Mellon Foundation grant awarded to Bucknell. The funding was directed to exploration of real life problems (the need to find new ways to educate children in the midst of a pandemic), specifying that the recipients' knowledge be shared outside the traditional academic outlets and with a larger audience, in this case central Pennsylvania community members, including young students.

As the grant's Faculty Ambassador, Claire Campbell, History

Professor and Affiliated Faculty in Environmental Studies & Sciences, recognized the potential for turning the outdoors into classrooms for a range of academic disciplines.

"Claire conceived the Nature's Explorers as a way to provide safe outdoor environmental education on a Conservancy easement from various perspectives such as humanities and sciences," said Conservancy president Jeff Trop.

Last fall Trop, Bucknell Professor of Geology and Environmental Geosciences, led "Meet a Geologist," programs which served as a prototype for the Nature's Explorers programs. At the geology sessions small groups of socially distanced, masked participants were led along Dales' Ridge trail, down to Buffalo Creek, and other points on the property where they observed, tested and discussed how the landscape and human history in the area has been shaped by geology and deep time. The program's enthusiastic reception influenced the decision to move forward with an expanded program.

Seven 90 minute Nature's Explorers programs are scheduled on Saturdays in April through June with programs beginning at 2 pm. Registration and a \$7 fee are required for each session. Register on the Lewisburg Children's Museum website at <https://www.lewisburgchildrensmuseum.org/natures-explorers>

April 10 - Creative Writing/Poetry
Katie Hayes

April 24 - Biology and Farming
Mark Spiro

May 8 - Biology (Birds)
Morgan Benowitz-Fredericks

May 15 - Insects

Elizabeth Capaldi

May 22 - Art

Anna Kell

June 5 - Biology (Plants)

Chris Martine

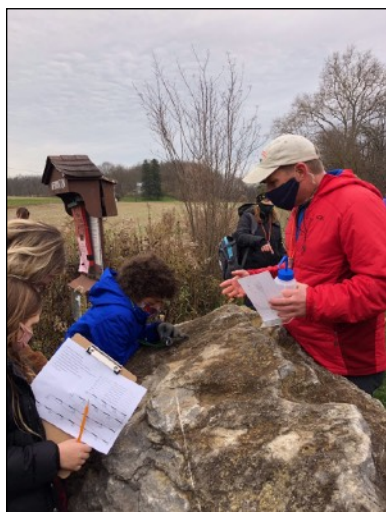


Buffalo Creek is always a point of interest among young visitors and is frequently the setting for experiments and testing.

June 19 - Biology (Water)
Matt McTammany

All sessions will be conducted at the Dale-Engle-Walker property with the exception of the June 19 program, which will be held at Kelly Twp. Community Center on Fort Titzell Road.

The Forest School Day Camp which meets weekly on Thursdays at the Dale-Engle-Walker property is a complement to the Nature's Explorers program. (See opposite page.)



Students attending a Meet a Geologist session recorded their findings on data sheets.



Parent participation was encouraged at the Meet A Geologist sessions.

News from Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance of the Merrill Linn Conservancy

We welcome our newest board member, David Elton. David and his wife Linda moved here from Alabama, where he was a professor of Civil Engineering at Auburn University. He is an expert in geosynthetics for retaining walls, landfills, slopes and earth dams, as well as building and bridge foundations.

He is well published in this area, has received many professional awards, is a Professional Engineer (AL), and a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers. His interest in environmental projects includes stream bank stabilization, erosion control, and surface water quality. David and Linda have 5 children and fifteen grandchildren.

BCWA recently received an award from the Ocean Conservancy for "Outstanding and Dedicated Service to the International Coastal Cleanup and Commitment to Achieving Trash Free Seas." This recognized our illegal-

dump cleanup last November, done under the auspices of "Pick up Pennsylvania, 2020," part of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, an organization dedicated to keeping Pennsylvania free of trash and illegal dumps.

Our cleanup was done on two sites in the flood plain of Buffalo Creek along Campbell Mill Road. We collected 2,620 pounds of trash including tires, a sofa, chairs, construction debris, a table soccer game, glass, and plastic bottles, etc.

Thanks to Susquehanna Valley Auto Glass for providing our staging area for the cleanup, Schnure's Disposal for supplying the dumpster, Buffalo Township for agreeing to pay for the disposal, and our 9 volunteers for doing the heavy lifting: Linda and David Elton, Allan Grundstrom, Gerald Heckler, Bud Hiller, Sue Mitchell, David Staebler, Randy Straub, and Victor Udo.

Conservancy Hosts 'Rain to Drain,' Virtual Rainwater Runoff Event

The Conservancy in partnership with Penn State Extension environmental educators hosted a live, virtual, hands-on event exploring how the built environment in a community—buildings, parking lots, and other impermeable surfaces—affects the quality of rainwater runoff that enters our local streams. The hands-on educational opportunity, Rain to Drain--Slow the Flow and Protect our Community Streams, was geared to intermediate and middle school students in the Borough of Lewisburg and surrounding areas.

The program, the Conservancy's first virtual environmental education event, was made possible by the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania's approval of a \$500 award to the Conservancy. The award was provided by a grant from Lindig Lewisburg Foundation Fund at the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania (FCFP).

"We are grateful for the support of FCFP and for their recognition that clean water and healthy streams are closely linked with community wellness and quality of life," says Tali MacArthur, Conservancy Education Chair. "With the Foundation's support, we were able to offer a fun and educational program highlighting how we can all make a difference right where we live."

The young people who participated in this hands-on program performed several experiments demonstrating what happens to rainwater runoff and how small changes in our communities can protect the quality of water entering our streams. The Conservancy provided registrants with materials for the hands-on experiments.

The First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania works to improve the quality of life in north central Pennsylvania through community leadership, the promotion of philanthropy, the strengthening of nonprofit impact, and the perpetual stewardship of charitable assets. FCFP strives to create powerful communities through passionate giving.

Linn Conservancy's Business Partners for 2021

Thank you to those business owners who have joined our Business Partner program for 2021. Your membership renewal letter contained your 2021 partner card indicating participating businesses for the current year and the discounts they offer to you. Please patronize them as we hope that both they and our members benefit by this relationship.

Bertoni's Pizza, Montandon;
Lewisburg Studio, Vargo Outdoors,
Mondragon Books, Lewisburg;
Brookside Bikes, Mifflinburg;
Shaffer Landscapes, Middleburg;
Ian Adrian Nature Photography,
iannaturephotography.com

Plein Air returns to connect artists and photographers with nature

A COVID-conscious, but much expanded Plein Air Event is returning in 2021, again sponsored by the Merrill Linn Conservancy, Union County Historical Society, and the Lewisburg Arts Council with the addition of its Lewisburg Photography Club component.

On Sunday, April 25, artists and photographers will work *en plein air*—in the outdoors, rather than in a studio—at a time of year when nature is most alive. Participants are invited to work from 9 am to 5 pm at two sites protected by conservation easements with the Conservancy—the Dale-Engle-Walker (DEW) property at 1471 Strawbridge Road west of Lewisburg and the Koons Trail property on N. 4th Street in Mifflinburg. Volunteers will be posted at both DEW and the Koons Trail to assist and provide complete information about Plein Air and other opportunities for the artists and photographers in the following days.

During the week of April 26 through May 2, artists and photographers are invited to return to the DEW and Koons properties to complete their work. They are also welcome to work at the Shamokin Mountain Trail, located near Forest House Lane off Stein Lane, and at the scenic Shikellamy State Park. Detailed descriptions and directions for each site, along with guidelines for artists and general information about the Plein Air Event are available online at www.linnconservancy.org and www.lewisburgartscouncil.com.

The optional Plein Air Workshop for artists will be held outdoors in an area adjacent to the DEW House from 9 am to 11 am on April 25. Local artist David McSween, who was profiled in the Log's Spring 2020 issue as leader of the COVID-cancelled 2020 Plein Air program, will lead the workshop. He will talk about the importance of well-thought-out and realized composition and the development of a palette that



Local artist David McSween's work includes portraiture, figure painting—his favorite genre—and still lifes, as well as landscapes. He has been invited to participate next month in the Salmagundi Club's Drawing Competition of the Draped Figure, which celebrates the historic New York City art club's 150th anniversary.

works efficiently for the artist. He will then demonstrate his approach as he works, discussing the steps he takes to develop his painting. Workshop participants are required to wear masks and socially distance. All Plein Air participants are expected to follow CDC safety guidelines.

The workshop is free, but participation is limited to just 20. Registration for this session is required. For registration details, go to www.lewisburgartscouncil.com. Refreshments, traditionally served at the workshop, will not be available this year, but all are welcome to bring coffee and breakfast snacks as well as lunch for later in the day.

A nature photography workshop, led by Dan Hyde, president of the Lewisburg Photography Club, will be held online prior to April 25 to prepare participants for working outdoors. Complete information is available at <http://lewisburgphotoclub.org/>

Both artists and photographers are invited to present and sell their work in online shows. Artists will have an opportunity to have their work professionally photographed prior to the show with time and place to be announced.



During the following weekend, May 1 and 2, artists and photographers will go to town to work in the streets and open spaces of Lewisburg. Participation is free form—anyone may sketch or photograph at any time and in any location that weekend.

Illustrate Lewisburg is the theme for the urban sketchers—a term that describes artists who practice on-location drawing, capturing their surroundings and the places they live. The theme for photographers is Lewisburg Architecture Challenge, which is an opportunity for photographers to explore and record Lewisburg's rich architectural heritage. Complete information about the May 1 and 2 activities will be available at the Lewisburg Arts Council and the Lewisburg Photography Club websites.



McSween captures the mood of summer at the lake.

Board Member, Former President Wayne McDiffett Stepping Down

By Warren “Abe” Abrahamson

Founded in 1988, the Merrill Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy has protected over 1,600 acres of forests, fields, agricultural lands, streams, and wetlands. The Conservancy provides numerous family-friendly educational opportunities annually and maintains five hiking trails. These and other accomplishments are the consequences of much effort by Conservancy volunteers.



The Shamokin Mountain Trail crosses land owned by Wayne (left) & Ruth as well as lands of Chris and Abe (right) and State Game Land #193. Wayne and Abe have served as trail stewards since its opening in the early 1990s.

Photo: Chris Abrahamson

One volunteer particularly stands out because of his more than three decades of devoted service to the Conservancy. Wayne McDiffett joined the Conservancy's Board of Directors shortly after the Conservancy's founding. Current Conservancy coordinator, Geoff Goodenow, pointed out that Wayne has assisted literally all aspects of the Board's work and has done whatever was needed on the Nomination and Site & Stewardship Committees to protect lands and waterways! Wayne served as Conservancy President from 2004-2012, a period in which the Conservancy accepted nine conservation easements totaling >700 acres.

Wayne will step down from the Conservancy Board,

Nomination Committee, and Site & Stewardship Committee this spring when he and his wife Ruth Burnham move to Boulder, Colorado to be near their daughter Christie, son-in-law Rob, and grandson, Julian. Although Wayne is retiring from the Conservancy's leadership, the legacy of his more than three decades of service will continue.

Wayne's commitment to protecting the region's natural areas extends back to the 1970s when he and Conservancy Site & Stewardship Chair Allen Schweinsberg searched for land appropriate for Bucknell's Natural Area. Allen offered "... we traveled the region together one summer, walking fields and forests, to examine habitats for what would become the 66-acre Bucknell University Chillisquaque Creek Natural Area... In more recent times his invaluable work on behalf of the Linn Conservancy stands out. More fields, more forests! His companionship outdoors was always accompanied by warmth and kindness for which I will ever be grateful."

Linn Conservancy co-founder and former president and coordinator Jeannette Lasansky shared "... I was privileged to work with Wayne as a diligent Board member and officer... Wayne was always ready – chainsaw in hand – on a fall or spring work morning at the Dale-Engle-Walker property – the Conservancy's first easement... I and so many others have benefited by his shared knowledge, experiences, and even temperament in reaching decisions together as a group."

Volunteering with the Conservancy has provided Wayne and his Conservancy colleagues with many memorable experiences in nature. Wayne, former Conservancy Board member John Tonzetich, and Abe Abrahamson have conducted annual stewardship inspections of three Snyder County and one Northumberland County Conservancy easements. John offered "... we look forward to this time as an enjoyable spring outing and end our day at a small mom & pop café much to Wayne's liking." John added "... I have appreciated Wayne's confident and personal manner in communicating with potential and active easement clients."

Sue Auman, former Conservancy coordinator and Board member, mentioned that on becoming the Conservancy's coordinator "... Wayne became my mentor, teacher, and friend... one of the greatest mentors I've had in my career. He's taught me so much about patience, kindness, and doing the right thing at a pace that matches the rhythm of nature."

Wayne and his wife Ruth Burnham have supported the Conservancy's activities financially – they became

Continued

life members of the Conservancy as soon as life memberships were made available. In 2013, Wayne and Ruth along with Chris and Abe Abrahamson donated a conservation easement on their co-owned and individually owned forestlands, a donation that protected a 43-acre parcel near Lewisburg in perpetuity. In the early 1990s, Wayne, Ruth, Chris, & Abe opened this woodland to the public via the Shamokin Mountain Trail. Wayne and Abe have served as the trail's stewards for nearly 30 years.

Although we will miss Wayne and Ruth, we are delighted that they will soon live close to family. We wish them much joy as they share family times and explore the natural lands in Colorado. Gratitude and appreciation are expressed in many ways – we can simply say “thank you” yet actions speak more strongly than words. John F. Kennedy said, “As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them.” Wayne’s decades of service to the Conservancy’s goals exemplifies how volunteer actions can accomplish much. Wayne has been a remarkable model for volunteerism.



A Linn Conservancy Site & Stewardship crew records species information for the baseline document that accompanies the conservation easement on the Stahl property. From left to right: Wayne McDiffett, Allen Schweinsberg, John Tonzetich, Abe Abrahamson, and Kerry Givens. Photo: Kerry Givens.



Wolf Den - Cub Scout Pack 3538 - Celebrates Spring at Conservancy Native Garden

On the second day of spring, Cub Scout Pack 3538 gave a wake up call to the Conservancy’s native plant garden at the East Buffalo Twp. municipal property. The Wolf den members picked up a winter’s accumulation of litter and then raked up dead leaves, twigs, and other debris---enough to fill a truck bed! The pack, chartered by Faith Lutheran Church in Lewisburg, will be back to mulch the native perennials, shrubs, and bunch grasses. Thank you from everyone at the Conservancy to den leader Donna Laroya and the members of Pack 3538 for getting our garden off to a good start.

Remembering Neal Woodruff

Long-time Conservancy supporter and board member Neal Woodruff passed away late last year. Neal contributed locally in many capacities to help preserve the natural beauty of our central PA home. Through the 1990's Neal served on the Union County Planning Commission and on the County's Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. He was a member of the Great Stream Commons Open Space Committee and was instrumental in the establishment of Linn Conservancy affiliate, the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance. Neal contributed to a number of Linn publications and video scripts and for several years he had a column, Making Tracks, in the Union County Journal and in the Linn Log. Here, we remember Neal with one of his many articles from the Making Tracks series. This one from 2000 remains relevant today:



On November 9th I attended a seminar in Williamsport called "Preserving Family Lands: Estate and Tax Planning for Landowners and their Families." It was led by Stephen J. Small, a Boston lawyer who has specialized for two decades in the law governing inheritance and conservation easements. Some 35 or 40 people attended, and the majority were lawyers who evidently felt a need—hopefully growing throughout the

country—for up-to-date information on these matters. Small began by identifying three current and perhaps growing problems. The first is the greatly increasing value of land everywhere, which poses a new challenge. As a general rule, he said, all transfers of wealth are potentially subject to gift tax or estate tax, which can be substantial.

The second problem is that landowners are generally now an older group, which means that much land is likely to change hands one way or another—and potentially also to change use. The likelihood of this

result increases as landowners confront the need to realize the value of lands in order to satisfy tax bills.

The third problem is that professionals (read "lawyers") are well prepared to advise developers of real estate properties, but few are similarly well prepared to help owners preserve and protect land. While the number of land trusts and the use of conservation easements have both greatly increased in recent years, knowledge of these things has not kept pace among legal professionals.

Small is an advocate of what he calls "succession planning" that reaches beyond a present generation and the one that immediately follows it to a third generation and possibly beyond. What makes such planning possible are the exceptions in tax laws to the general rule that transfers of wealth are potentially taxable. Anticipating a transfer of property well in advance makes possible a number of entirely legal expedients.

Among these expedients is the conservation easement. An owner establishes an easement voluntarily. And there is great flexibility in drawing up conservation easements. A farmer, for example, may choose to give up the right to create building lots along a property's road frontage. The owner of a wood lot might stipulate that a particular portion of it might be available for timbering but the balance must remain untouched and available to hunters. It is possible for an owner to retain rights to some income-producing uses of a piece of land that are compatible with conservation values—and perhaps support those values with the income realized.

There are technicalities in all of this which I, as a lay person, could mostly follow but cannot claim to have mastered. The principles, though, seem quite clear. If we really wish to have and pass on control of any land we now own, we need to find good legal help and plan well ahead. The conservation easement is an admirable way of ensuring that natural land, open land, farmed land, wooded land will remain natural, open, farmed, wooded. The Linn Conservancy stands ready, I scarcely need to add, to give assistance to anyone wishing to explore the possibilities offered by conservation easements or land gifts.



thank you!

NEW MEMBERS

Kristen Irvine, Winfield; Katherine Frey, New Berlin; Kristine Trego, Matthew Heintzelman, Lewisburg

THANK YOUS

Special donation toward

Conservancy capacity building

Susan Warner-Mills and Marilyn Brill

Donation in honor of Donna and Dick Constant (easement donors)

from family members Raquelli, Rick, Matthew, Jonathan, Rotem, Liz, Joe, Grace, and Orri

Donations to Endowment Fund:

Nancy Macky, Warren and Chris Abrahamson, Anonymous

Donation from the estate of Donna Slear

Donations from Life Members

Warren and Chris Abrahamson, Richard and Donna Constant,

R. Jeffrey Coup, Geoff Goodenow, Mark Graf, Carol Ingald, William and Jeannette Lasansky, Nancy Macky, Tony Markunas, Wayne McDiffett, Carl and Faye Oberheim, Melody Persing, Wayne Stahl, Eve Granick Wheatcroft

Donations to BCWA in memory of Allan Quant—Tom Duck, Geoff Goodenow

In-Kind donations: As best we can, we track the in-kind donations of time, mileage, and other unreimbursed expenses made on behalf of the Conservancy by our members and friends.

All of your efforts contribute to the accomplishments that help protect our local natural environment. In accounting for all of these donations, the 2020 total in-kind dollar value comes to over \$45,000—and we know

that there is much that is not counted.

This, in addition to your support through membership renewals, donations to our endowment, and other special programs, is vital to the continuing successes of the Conservancy. Thank you!

Raise the Region donations

Thank you to all who supported the Conservancy by way of the recent Raise the Region fundraiser for area non-profits. The Conservancy received donations from about 50 unique donors totaling \$4,790, which exceeded its 2020 dollars raised.

Many thanks and much appreciation to all who support our mission through this event, your membership, contributions to our endowment and volunteer services. We can't do it without you!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Detach and mail to Linn Conservancy, PO Box 501, Lewisburg, PA 17837

YES! I / we want to support the Linn Conservancy this year as a: Sponsor \$500_____

Supporter \$250 _____ Friend \$100 _____ Contributor \$50_____ Other_____

This is a contribution from _____ Individual_____ Family _____ Business

_____New membership _____ Renewal

I am also adding \$_____ to support the Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance (BCWA)

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Name(s)_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Home phone _____ Cell phone_____

E-mail_____

(Or pay via PayPal through our website—www.linnconservancy.org)

If you are interested in making a separate contribution to the Linn Conservancy Endowment Fund, email linn@ptd.net or call 570-524-8666.

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spring 2021

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