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Linn Log

WINTER 2023



PHOTO: DIANE DONATO

This Land Is Your Land: EBT Buys Turtle Creek Park Protecting it as Open Sp

Turtle Creek Park in East Buffalo Township is 79 acres of woodlands, hills, fields, streams, and wetlands. It is one of the last large parcels of open land in the township. Bordering Furnace Road, it stretches from Supplee Mill Road to just west of Route 15.

For years, the site was officially Turtle Creek Park. But for most visitors, with or without pups, it was simply “the dog park,” a diverse wildlife habitat loved for its openness and wild character. The Turtle Creek Park Association caringly tended the property.

Those who saw the land as their space—a place for humans and dogs

alike to experience nature and interact with others—were stunned in 2018 by the announcement that the property’s owner—Hallowing Run Youth Organization—was planning to sell the park to the Lewisburg Alliance Church. Following the sale, the park’s fenced-in dog plot was removed and 35 acres of trees were clear-cut. This was in anticipation of development that would include a church complex, gymnasium, and soccer fields. Visitors, however, were still welcome to walk the trails and bring dogs on leash.

But by 2022, the Lewisburg Alliance Church’s vision had changed. Two

years of COVID-19, 4 years of mortgage payments, and the extent of the property’s wetland areas had shifted perspectives on building project. With a new pastor on board, church leaders approached the East Buffalo Twp. Supervisors—Jim Knight, Katie Evans, and former Turtle Creek Park Association board member Char Gray—who were determined to acquire and protect the land as an East Buffalo Twp. public park.

Since then the supervisors have purchased and taken possession of the 79 acres at a price of \$950,000. EBT received a \$300,000 gift from the

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Mission of the Merrill W. Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy

To preserve and protect significant ecological sites in Union, upper Northumberland, and neighboring counties and to engage the public with conservation issues that affect the health of our environment.

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The Merrill W. Linn Land and Waterways Conservancy was founded in April 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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A bridge crosses Turtle Creek giving access to the eastern end of the Park.



This Land is Your Land (continued)

from page 1.) Degenstein Foundation and a \$685,000 grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, coming mostly from American Rescue Plan Act money appropriated for recreation and conservation.

Merrill Linn Conservancy and EBT Craft Conservation

Easement The Conservancy, over its 35-year-history, has worked primarily with individual landowners who want to preserve their land as it is forever. They want to know that the next owner—whether a family member or a stranger—will be legally bound by the conservation easement that they and the Conservancy designed.

The model conservation easement required for public lands and parks is briefer and easier to write than easements protecting private property. But clearly thought-out and precisely-written easements are essential for maintaining the vision for public property.

As the Turtle Creek Park easement document was written, as many as six to seven Conservancy Site/Stewardship committee members were at the table, while as many as three East Buffalo Twp. Supervisors were present. That was an advantage in drawing out a wide variety of ideas and opinions during the easement writing process. But it also guarantees turnover of leadership. At our latest meeting, one of the EBT Supervisors observed, “In 10 years it is likely that none of us will be sitting at this table.” So, a clear vision for the property’s future, spelled out in a conservation easement, is essential.

The Turtle Creek Park easement has been reviewed by counsel for both East Buffalo Township and for the Merrill Linn Conservancy. A final document should be completed and signed in a few weeks. *In future issues, we will look at how the complete conservation easement is being realized at the park.*

IN MEMORIAM

John Snook 1964–2022

John Snook, a past president and long-time Board member of the Linn Conservancy, passed away in late December following a lengthy battle with Glioblastoma.

As a farmer of 37 years with a family tradition of sustainable farming practices, he brought a valuable perspective on agricultural conservation issues to the Conservancy. The land that he farmed was formerly known as the Seebold farm. The Seebolds were among the first families in Union County to treat farm-

land in accordance with The Nature Conservancy’s “best practices.”

A 1986 Penn State University graduate with an AG/Business Management Degree, John was a past board member of the Farm Service Agency and Mifflinburg Young Farmers. He was also a member of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and the Mifflinburg Kiwanis Club.

John is survived by his wife of 32 years, Kim Bowersox Snook, and his mother, Nancy Seebold Snook, among others.

Adventure Coordinator Becky Cunfer Launches Spring Nature Programs

The Linn Conservancy is launching an exciting, expanded program of nature events for children, teens, adults, and multi-generational families beginning in March. It is all happening thanks to a grant and a substantial donation from a longtime Conservancy member.

Our **Adventure Coordinator Becky Cunfer** came on board last fall as a part-time employee whose position was funded by a portion of an education-outreach grant from the 1994 Charles B. Degenstein Foundation. Working limited hours, Becky developed and presented five well-attended programs, including an owl prowl that attracted 53 to Dale's Ridge.

She increased social media engagement with 2 to 3 posts per week to Facebook and Instagram and postings to Kids Critter Challenge (activities for families). Becky increased awareness of the Merrill Linn Conservancy through participation at local fall events where her hands-on nature activities attracted children and adults.

At one of these fall events, retired Bucknell professor William Becker met and talked with Becky about her goals for Linn Conservancy's outreach, especially for children. He was impressed by her wide experience, her ideas for Conservancy outreach events, and enthusiasm for bringing nature and environmental issues to young people through exciting, hands-on programs.

Becker believes the Conservancy will benefit from expanding Adventure Coordinator position to fulltime status. Working with Operations Manager Chad North and Treasurer Cheryl Stayton, Becker made a substantial donation to create a fund that will accomplish that goal for the next two years.

Becky, who will begin working fulltime in March following a family vacation in Alaska, says, "The Linn Conservancy is now offering open enrollment for a fun-filled lineup of nature programs for all ages and interests."

Enrollment opportunities include:

- **Nature's Explorer programs** for children ages four to ten years old. These programs are hosted at the Dale Engle Walker Homestead and Dale's Ridge Trail in conjunction with the Lewisburg Children's Museum, Bucknell University and the Union County Historical Society.
- Junior Naturalist programs will be available for children ten to seventeen years old.



Becky works with Campbell Stewart at a nature event, showing him how to safely start a fire in the out-doors.

- Living Landscapes programs for adults hosted in conjunction with Bucknell University and the Union County Historical Society
- Naturalist programs for adults will be offered for adults eighteen years and older.
- Family nature programs for the entire family and/or participants of all ages.

Programs include walking/biking tours, guided nature hikes, art programs, bird house building, a conservation-themed day camp, and hosting a Great American Backyard Campout event for local families. For more information about our full list of our 2023 programs and to register, visit www.linnconservancy.org/registration. Linn Conservancy members will receive 50% off registration for many of the Conservancy-sponsored events.

Nature's Explorers

Dance with Kelly Knox

Saturday, March 11, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

(Ages 4-10 and their families)

Location: Dale's Ridge Trail, 1471 Straw-bridge Road, Lewisburg, PA

Guest Host: Kelly Knox, Associate Professor of Dance, Bucknell University

Enjoy dance and movement in nature.

Please register for this program on the Lewisburg Children's Museum website at lewisburgchildrensmuseum.org/natures-explorers.

Linn Conservancy 35th Anniversary

(Celebration & Open House)

Tuesday, March 21, 3:00 – 6:00 pm

(All Ages)

Location: Linn Conservancy Office, 589 Fairground Road, Suite 2, Lewisburg, PA
Meet our Staff and Celebrate our 35th Anniversary with us on the first day of Spring. *Registration not required. Parent(s) required to accompany children.*

Explore the Night Sky

Thursday, March 23. (Rain Date March 25) 8:00 – 9:30 pm (Ages 18+)

Location: Bucknell University Observatory, Lewisburg, PA

Observe and identify stars and constellations. *Registration required.*

Nature's Explorers Pictures and Sounds, Look and Listen

Saturday, April 8, 2:00– 3:30 pm

(Ages 4-10 and their families)

Location: Dale's Ridge Trail, 1471 Straw-bridge Road, Lewisburg, PA

Guest Host: Rebecca Meyers, Academic Film Programmer and Lecturer, Bucknell University. Explore photography and music in nature. *Parent(s) required to accompany children. Register at lewisburgchildrensmuseum.org/natures-explorers.*

Hawk Talk and Birding Hike, Saturday, April 15, 9:00 – 11:00 am

(Ages 18+)

Location: Dale's Ridge Trail, 1471 Straw-bridge Road, Lewisburg, PA

Guest Host: Michael Kuriga, "The Bird Man" and his peregrine falcon to learn about birds of prey. Then enjoy bird watching along the trails at Dale's Ridge. *Register at linnconservancy.org/registration.*

Trees & Me, Saturday, April 15, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

(All ages)

Location: Dale's Ridge Trail, 1471 Straw-bridge Road, Lewisburg, PA

Learn about the legacy of trees, explore forest ecology and discover what it means to be an environmental steward. *Register at linnconservancy.org/registration. Parent(s) required to accompany children.*

Frog Frenzy, Saturday, April 22, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

(All Ages)

Location: Glacier Pools Preserve, 757 Pine Road, Hughesville, PA

Guest Host: PA Fish and Boat Commission
Learn about amphibians, indicator species, geology and vernal pools on this guided hike.

Register at linnconservancy.org/registration. Family friendly event for all ages. Parent(s) required to accompany children.

Art in the Park Saturday, April 29, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

(All Ages)

Location: Hufnagle Park, Lewisburg, PA.

Join us at Hufnagle Park during the Arts Festival to create your very own painting to take home. *Registration not required. Parent(s) required to accompany children.*

Sunset Rotary Honors Conservancy

at Frosty 5K The Linn Conservancy sends a very grateful 'thank you' to **Lewisburg Sunset Rotary** and all its members who voted to award 50 per cent of its 2023 Frosty 5K race income to the Conservancy. The presentation was made at the Campus Theatre prior to the race. Sunset Rotary donated a total of \$2,235. Thank you also to Sunset Rotary for the use of their Mr. Frosty display at the Conservancy's booth in Hufnagle Park during the event.

Historical Tour of Lewisburg (Following Limestone Run)
Part I – Walking Tour, Saturday, May 6, 9:00 – 11:00 am
(Ages 18+ or child with parent/guardian) Starting Location: Meet at the east end of Mill Street, east of the intersection of Mill Street and Brown Street.

Bird House Building Saturday, May 13, 9:00 – 11:00 am
(Ages 10-17) Location: Turtle Creek Preserve, 1248 Supplee Mill Rd, Lewisburg, PA Blue bird boxes are ready to be built and dispersed with your help. *Please register at linnconservancy.org/registration.*

Nature's Explorers Birds, Saturday, May 13, 2:00 – 3:30 p m
(Ages 4-10 and their families) Location: Dale's Ridge Trail, 1471 Strawbridge Road, Lewisburg, PA. Guest Hosts: Morgan Benowitz-Fredericks, Professor of Biology/Animal Behavior Bucknell University and Matthew Heintzelman, Associate Professor of Biology, Bucknell University.

Historical Tour of Lewisburg (Following Limestone Run)
Part II – Bike Tour, Saturday, May 20, 9:00 – 11:00 am (Ages 18+ or child with parent/guardian). Starting Location: Meet at the St. Mary's Wetland on Hardwood Drive. End point: We'll bike the Buffalo Valley Rail Trail to Hoffa Mill Road (and the Purple Cow!)

Native Plant/Mushroom ID & Foraging Hike
Saturday, May 27, 9:00 am – 11:00 am (Ages 18+). Location: Dale's Ridge Trail, 1471 Strawbridge Road. Guest Hosts: Adam Wilks, Mycologist Keystone Spores and Bill Russell, Founder and past president of the Central Pennsylvania Mushroom Society.
Register at linnconservancy.org/registration.

Trail Blazing Scavenger Hunt @ Susquehanna Greenway Outdoor Expo, Saturday, June 3, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm.
Location: Shikellamy State Park, 401 Bridge Ave, Sunbury, PA. Bring your family to enjoy a family friendly scavenger hunt in honor of National Trails Day. *Registration not required. Parent(s) required to accompany children.*

What's the Buzz About Pollinators?
Saturday, June 17, 9:00 – 11:00 am (Ages 18+) Location: Linn Conservancy Native Plant Garden, 589 Fairground Road, Lewisburg, PA Discover the importance of pollinators and native plant species while exploring our Native Plant Garden. *Register at linnconservancy.org/registration.*

Conservation Day Camp, Monday-Friday, June 19-23, 9:00am – 3:30pm (Ages 8-17)
Location: Dale's Ridge Trail, 1471 Strawbridge Road, Lewisburg, PA Enjoy a week of outdoor fun, primitive skill building and more. *Registration required. For children ages 8-17. Participants and parent(s) should also plan to attend Camp Orientation scheduled for May 27th from 1-3 pm.*

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday, March 25, 1-4 pm, Rain date April 1
Sierra Club's North Central PA Group
Adopt-A-Highway Event: Seeking volunteers to pick up litter along adopted stretch of highway on Route 15
Meet at self-storage facility at intersection of Route 15 and Furnace Road.

Saturday, April 22, 10 am – 2 pm
2nd annual Joy to the Earth Celebration
East Snyder Park, University Park, Selinsgrove
Sponsored by *Susquehanna Valley Chapter of Citizens Climate*
Lobby Contact: Kay Cramer, Chapter Leader 570-541-1175

Wednesday through Friday, April 26, 27, 28
WeConservePA's Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference

Wednesday, May 3, 5:30 pm
Merrill Linn Conservancy Annual Spring Soiree
Returning to Shady Mountain Winery for annual spring celebration. Save the date.

Saturday, June 17, 10 am-4 pm
Celebration at the Farm
A living history event centers around interactive learning, teaching of historic crafts and tasks of the 1800s.
Contact Tony Noll 570-837-3104
Noll-Spangler National Historic Farm

New Members:
Lewisburg: Joseph Hamilton, Christina Steele, Stephen Becker
Mifflinburg: Amy Gaines, Nancy Morgan

Honorary Gifts:
Marylou Trop *in honor of her son, Jeff Trop*
Jane Coyle *in honor of Harry (Fuzz) Fornwalt.*

Memorial Gifts:
Cynthia Kessler *in memory of Jeff Bowers.*
Joseph Priestley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship *in memory of Neal Woodruff and Margaret Moyer.*
Warren and Chris Abrahamson *in memory of their daughter, Jill R. Abrahamson.*
Jeannette Lasansky *in memory of John Snook, former board president of the Linn Conservancy.*

Our thanks to all donors:
Matt Roberts for Keystone Palette & Recycling, Robert Lucas, Cheryl Stayton and Brad Miller, Ellen Herman, Diane Donato, Elizabeth Capaldi, Chris and Warren Abrahamson, Laura Brenner, Laura and Jeffrey Evans, William Becker, Jeffrey Kapsar, Lance Miller, Katherine Frey, Owen Floody, Roy Fontaine, Ann and Ed Kaye, Maureen Murphy, and Chris Bergesen for underwriting of Merrill Linn Conservancy easement owner videos.



Scan the QR code for complete program information.