



"Conserving working farms and forests"

Report to the Membership

Volume 16, Issue 1
Winter 2006

NORTHCENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY

Visscher Easement Completed

NPC has added another conservation easement to its growing list of successes. Mr. Visscher and his late wife have owned a Loyalsock Township, Lycoming County property since 1967. As people have built new houses on the outskirts of Williamsport, the area around their property has come under development pressure.

Fields on the higher portions of the property offer spectacular views of the Susquehanna River's West Branch valley and Bald Eagle Mountain. Most of the property is forested, containing a diverse variety of habitats, and has been under a forest management plan since 1992. The owners improved their timber stands, maintained existing roads and trails, and constructed a new access road. For many years they heated their home with wood cut from their woodland.

With their interest in forest management, the Visschers had a long association with the Lycoming County Woodland Owners Association and did the first work in their woodland through a timber sale in 1971. They learned about NPC through their consulting forester, and wanting to protect the natural and scenic features of their property, worked with NPC to place a conservation easement agreement on 57 acres.

We, our descendants, and the resources protected, all benefit from this and other conservation easements. ❖

One is Good —Two is Better

In 2005 a landowner worked with NPC to place a conservation easement on 373 acres of forest land he owns on Bradford County's Robwood Mountain. Now he's done it again!

The Bride Farm, in Bradford County's Asylum Township, is the farm on which the current owner was raised. Bradford County's

agricultural conservation program holds an agricultural easement on 87 acres of the farm and recently NPC completed a conservation

easement agreement with the landowner to protect the remaining 72 acres. Although there are small wetlands, most of this area is wooded—including the acres of trees that the owner and his father planted many years ago as well as the trees he has planted in the last few years.

Because it is at the transition between oak forests and northern hardwood forests, an extremely diverse mix of tree species occupies the forested acres of the Bride Farm. This woodland also protects the watershed of two streams that flow directly into the Susquehanna River.

Included in NPC's easement is the protection of over 3500 feet of historic stone walls and almost 2000 feet of equally historic and much less common stump fences. With increasing pressure to sell the stones from old walls for landscaping in suburbia, these walls are now protected from all but the ravages of time and weather.

EASEMENT continued on page 5.

"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."

~Theodore Roosevelt



The Visscher property is mainly forested but contains many roads and trails as shown here.

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Membership Activity from 9/8/2005 through 12/31/2005

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Many thanks to our corporate members for their support of NPC's mission. Please take note of those businesses who have shown they care about the future of our communities with their corporate membership and show YOUR support to them.

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Helen Schwarz

Elizabeth Moses by
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Joann Rishel

Additional Donations

ChiliTech Internet Solutions
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Bald Eagle Township
Coploff Ryan & Welch
Miller Brothers Auto Sales
Webb's Super-Gro
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Sponsors of our Tioga County Program

Patterson Lumber
Company
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Company

Fall Membership Events a Success

This Fall NPC provided a program on the region's geology as well as a program about the Civilian Conservation Corps. These events were held in lieu of the traditional regional dinners.

In October in Clinton County we had to change speakers mid-river (pardon the pun) and switch from a history of Rivermen to the geologic history of the river. Due to a health problem, Gil Hirschel was unable to journey to Lock Haven. Instead NPC member, Dr. John Way, stepped in to pinch hit. Dr. Way, a retired geology professor from Lock Haven University, graciously provided us with a presentation on how the region's landscape was formed.

At the end of the month we headed to Wellsboro and a program on the Civilian Conservation Corps. John Eastlake has been researching the CCC's for many years and not only provided us with a wonderful slide show, but also with first hand accounts of life in the camp.

John and his wife brought with them a CCC-er who was originally from Northumberland County but spent his CCC service in Tioga County. The County (and one of its female residents close to his age) convinced him to make Morris his home. Now in his 80s he brought his books, photos, and stories to share with the group. In addition, another CCC alum from Wellsboro also joined us. Now a retired postal carrier, during his CCC service he was at a camp near Galeton and shared the story of the Camp's mascot, a bear. It was a wonderful program that was informative, lively and fun!

Thanks to the sponsors of our programs: Bald Eagle Township, Coploff Ryan & Welch, Miller Brothers Auto Sales, Webb's Super-Gro Products, Inc., Patterson Lumber Company, and Wheeland Lumber Company. ❖

Mengee Acquisition

It's official! The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is now the proud owner of 31 acres along Painter Run in Gaines Township, Tioga County. NPC purchased the property from Victor and Betty Mengee in December 2004. NPC acted as an intermediary buyer and worked during 2005 to transfer the property to the Commonwealth to become part of the Tioga State Forest. The transfer was completed in November 2005.

So if you're out on the Bee Tree Ski Trail this winter, don't forget to stop and check out the property. The public recreation benefit, as well as the water quality benefit are just two of the many conservation values this property holds. ❖

Helen McMahon Remembers NPC

Helen McMahon and her sister, Marie Logue, generously donated a conservation easement on the 17 acres they owned in Muncy Creek Township, Lycoming County, in 1994. The easement prevents further subdivision and also ensures the exterior façade of the 1810 stone home remains unchanged. Marie passed away shortly after they donated easement. Helen continued to live at the home, and hopefully enjoyed the yearly monitoring visits as much as NPC did. Not only did we get to visit a wonderful property, we were able to visit with Helen and sit and watch her bird feeders with her.

Helen passed away in November, still living in her beloved home. She very generously included NPC in her will, and for that we are very thankful. Her executors are working to sell the home and her antique collection in order to distribute her assets as directed. Helen wanted to give back to organizations that meant something to her, and in her opinion were working to improve the world we live in. If you are interested in learning more about the home for sale, or the antiques sale, please contact NPC. ❖

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Volunteers Needed!

If you are interested in helping NPC get more accomplished, look over these "help wanted ads" and give us a call or send an e-mail.

...Letter folder needed, no experience required
NPC mails out over 100 letters every month. We send letters thanking people for their contributions, asking people to renew their membership, as well as information packets to the board and committees. If you have some time, we can use your help!

...Envelope sealer needed, will provide glue
NPC has several large mailings on the horizon and we can use a few people to help. The Annual Dinner invitations will need stuffed and sealed this Spring, if you've got some time, we've got the glue.

...Volunteers needed for NPC's booth
Have some time and interest in talking to people about NPC? We will be setting up our display at the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited's Trout Kick-Off on March 3, 4, 5. If you have some time, we can use volunteers! If you can't help at the Kick-Off, but are interested in volunteering at other times, let us know. We are going to start a list of potential volunteers to call when opportunities come up.

Collecting Cultural Remnants

by Elisabeth L. Lynch

Project Director, Clinton County CleanScapes

When a new acquaintance casually inquires about my professional career, I gently smile and politely tell them I organize illegal dumpsite cleanups. Understandably they quickly respond with a perplexed squint to their eyes followed by a slight tilt to the head and then they utter, “You do *what?*” After my brief explanation, a moment of silence is broken with their next question. “Do you *like* picking up other people’s trash?” As predictable as their last question always is, my answer to their second question is always, “No”, followed by their short, “Oh.”

For the past eleven years I have organized and worked with hundreds of wonderful volunteers. In total we have removed thousands of tons of illegally discarded debris from Pennsylvania waterways and landscapes and many thousands of “pre-owned” tires. I have never enjoyed the act of picking up trash and I probably never will. So why do I love working for a nonprofit organization who’s mission is to eliminate illegally discarded debris from our community’s waterways and landscapes? *Because I can’t stand seeing it.*

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When I

do see the discarded cultural remnants of our society floating in our waterways or strewn along a woodland path, it infuriates me. How can some human beings “cleanup” their own property and then dump it somewhere else? That is a question Clinton County CleanScapes (CCC) can not fully answer; and instead of contemplating the illogical action of re-dumping one’s unwanted remnants, CCC will continue to educate our children and all citizens about the aesthetic and environmental impacts associated with illegal dumping. CCC will also continue to publicize the problem and initiate corrective measures.

Since 2000, 597 volunteers have worked with Clinton County CleanScapes, Inc. (formerly named PA CleanWays of Clinton County), to remove a total of 626 tons (1,314,600 lbs.) of illegally dumped, man-made debris and 3,246 “pre-owned” tires from Centre, Clinton and Lycoming Counties. These trash removal projects are costly, and to fund these events, CCC depends upon the generosity of our members and awarded mini-grants. One such mini-grant is from the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy’s *Stream Clean-up Program*. Funded in part by a PA DEP Growing

Greener Grant, CCC has recently utilized this program on four local cleanups that removed man-made debris and tires from the West Branch Susquehanna River, Bald Eagle Creek, Stony Gap Run and Queens Run. The mini-grant is easy to apply for and will fund cleanup supplies (e.g. gloves, bags) and landfill tipping fees (e.g. cost of the roll-off dumpster, disposal fees). Local organizations can inquire about similar “mini-grants” by contacting NPC.

For citizens and organizations that want to hold a cleanup event, but lack the experience and insurance, I encourage them to contact CCC and ask about CCC’s *Partnership Program* at 570-893-4123. This program allows citizens and organizations to report a littered area and CCC will investigate the site to determine the best course of action. The citizen or organization is under no obligation to organize or even contribute in the cleanup effort, but CCC welcomes their voluntary participation.

During the summer of 2006, CCC will return to our waterways and hold at least three riverine cleanups on the West Branch of the Susquehanna and at least one island cleanup event on Pine Creek. Dates will be set in early spring and interested parties should contact Clinton County CleanScapes for more information. Landscape cleanups will occur on the Great Island in Dunnstable Twp., Clinton Co. and flood related debris will be removed from a wetland adjacent to Bald Eagle Creek. To be added to our event notification list and to receive CCC’s complementary biannual newsletter, contact CCC at elynych@clintoncountypa.com or 570-893-4123.

In closing, I must clarify one more very important point. Although the act of picking up illegally dumped trash can be dirty, downright disgusting and often smelly work, I can honestly report that every cleanup event that I have had the pleasure of participating in has unearthed collectable items such as antique colored glass bottles, iron grapeshot from the Civil War Era, porcelain china and even coins! Most importantly, each event becomes a personally rewarding experience and surprisingly enjoyable because I am surrounded by people who deeply care about their community’s welfare, safety and each other. Enjoy the cool months of winter and come spring, I look forward to meeting you streamside!❖

Annual Appeal Thanks!

Thank you to everyone who donated during NPC's Annual Appeal. The names below provided donations we received **through December 31, 2005**. Additional donors will be listed in the Spring newsletter.

Jay & Juli Alexander
Warren & Mary Lou Baldys
Andrew Bamford
Ted & Tracey Barbour
Kevin Barletta
Larry R. Bason VMD
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Dave Winton
Alex & Tracie Witter
Michael & Mayor Mary Wolf
Charles R. Woltz
Andrea Young
Zimmer Insurance Agency

NPC Receives Tourism Grant

Where do you fish? A common question, but one NPC is hoping will help move a project toward completion. NPC has been working with the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association for over two years on a project in Columbia County. FCSA owns three properties that total approximately 96 acres and provide over 5,700 feet of frontage along Fishing Creek. The properties are spaced out along the creek to provide fishermen and recreationists with opportunities to experience different segments or move to another section if one section is already "busy." The group is ready to sell easements to NPC that prevent the properties from being subdivided and developed, and also require forest management activities to happen in the context of a forest management plan and *require public access*.

The Columbia County Tourism Fund recently gave NPC a big boost in this project by awarding a \$5000 grant toward the purchase of the conservation easements. Because the fund's resources are generated by a hotel tax, grant recipients must work to market their project and help increase visits to Columbia County. Working with the Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association, NPC is developing a brochure to show people where they can fish along Fishing Creek and how to obtain more information about outdoor recreation in the county. Other advertisements, including television, are being considered.

The conservation easements have been drafted and are ready to go as soon as the funding is in place. The idea will be to complete each conservation easement as the funds are raised. If you are interested in making a special contribution to help purchase easements on these three properties, please send your tax-deductible contribution to NPC's office, PO Box 2083, Williamsport, PA 17703. We still need over \$40,000 to make these projects happen!❖

EASEMENT continued from page 1.

They will provide habitat and travel corridors for wildlife into the foreseeable future. The property can be managed for wildlife habitat, forest products, as well as recreation and other traditional uses. The current owner has been working for many years to improve his woodlot and provide nesting sites for bluebirds. These activities and others will continue for years to come. NPC is fortunate to have Mr. Bride as a conservation partner.❖

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

PO Box 2083

Williamsport, PA 17703

570-323-6222

<http://www.npcweb.org/>

Non-Profit Rate

PAID

Permit No. 201

Williamsport, PA

17701

Return Service Requested

Upcoming Events

March 10 — Celebrity Waiter Night at the Peter Herdic House, Williamsport

May 10 — Annual Dinner at DiSalvo's Restaurant, Williamsport

July 15 — Ride the Pine Creek Trail. A 13 mile bike ride from Rattlesnake Rock (below Blackwell) to Ross Run (between Cammal and Slate Run), through "The Narrows" and passing a bald eagle nest. The scenery is spectacular, wildlife abundant and the company congenial.

August 27 — Wandering the Watershed (in conjunction with the Alpine Club). A six and a half mile hike on the 11,000 acre Williamsport Watershed; home to bear and bobcat, owl and orchid. We'll explore old ruins, walk the old roads, see a deer enclosure and a variety of forests.

October 29 — Waterfalls of McIntyre (in conjunction with the Alpine Club). A rugged six mile hike in the McIntyre Wild Area of the Loyalsock State Forest. Passing the waterfalls of Miners Run, through the location of the old mining village of McIntyre, to a rock outcrop with views of the Lycoming Creek valley, then down old railroad switchbacks to Rock Run Road.



Orvis Fly Rod Raffle Winner

Jack Murray of Hughesville was the lucky winner of the Orvis Fly Rod raffle! Congratulations Jack, and thank you to the Slate Run Tackle Shop for donating the rod, and all of you who bought tickets!

Golf Outing a Success

This year's golf tournament proved that every cloud has a silver lining. The tournament was postponed from September 26 to October 3 due to pending rain and wind. The postponement worked out fine as October 3 was sunny and warm with a bright, blue sky!

The putting and chipping contests were settled by a putt-off and a chip-off. The winners graciously donated their prize back to NPC. Thank you Ray Mattie and Albert Marchioni!

The winning foursome was sponsored by Montour Oil Service: Barry Thomas, Mike Celline, Joe Lipinski, and Lenny Dietrick. Thank you to all the players and volunteers!

Painting Students Study Easement

Our meeting room was well adorned from November through mid-January as Roger Shipley's Lycoming College art students used the Morgan Valley Road Easement property for their lesson on water colors. The property provided the inspiration and the students provided the creation. The works ranged from a single leaf to a tree lined path. Thank you to the students for sharing their talent and to Roger (a NPC member) for working with us on this project. We're hoping to host more artists in upcoming months.