

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

Nichols Run Protected

Northcentral Pennsylvania is characterized by its fields and, especially, by its forests. Because they are widespread features of the landscape it may sometimes be difficult to see the need to protect these vital resources. But subdivision, fragmentation and conversion to other uses continue to threaten the economic and ecological viability of our forests and agriculture and the quality of all of our lives.

Recently NPC's members and donors provided for another portion of the region's intact woodland to be protected forever from subdivision. Their support allowed NPC's staff to work with landowners who wanted to donate a conservation easement on their 155 acres in western Lycoming County.

Although portions of the property had once been farmed, most of the soils are more

suitable to growing trees than crops and active farming ended many years ago. Now those old fields are reverting to woodland to join the more than 100 forested acres that were not cleared for agriculture. The wooded acres are very diverse: mixed oak and hickory forests predominate, but there are also areas dominated by hemlock, white pine, birch and maple woodland.

However, it's not just woodland that makes this property special, there's also over 3,600 feet of Nichols Run, designated a High Quality-Cold Water Fishery. Nichols Run is a tributary of Pine Creek and flows into that larger stream just west of Jersey Shore.

Special protection has been afforded to the woodland bordering the stream and its unnamed tributaries to protect water quality and the aquatic life in the waterway.

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Conserving working farms and forests



Nichols Run woods in the fall of 2015



Nichols Run stream, 2016

Nichols Run Protected *Continued from front page*

As it passes through the newly conserved property, Nichols Run Road is a very scenic drive and the woodland along over 4,000 feet of the road was also guaranteed special protection to protect its scenic qualities.

Thank you to the landowners who had the

foresight to protect this beautiful property that helps to filter our water, cleanse our air, provide wildlife habitat, yield forest products and enhance the beauty of our area. And, thank you to our members and supporters who allowed us to be here and work with these landowners.

Progress Made on Transferring Wetlands to PA Game Commission to Expand State Game Lands 313

With the help and support of NPC's members, 27 acres in the wetland complex known locally as The Muck, or Morris's Marsh was purchased by NPC this spring. Since then steps have been taken to move the project forward.

The Game Commission's surveyors have been out and worked to get all the survey work done that was needed. While the dry summer isn't helping farmers or people with gardens, it did make surveying the wetland areas easier. The survey ensures the Game Commission can mark the boundaries of the property and that once in the State Game Lands system, the public will know where they are allowed to recreate.

The process of removing an old structure on the property is making progress. The building will be removed while NPC owns the property to help speed up the process of creating a small parking area for the public using the wetlands. The permits have been issued, now it's a matter of getting the building down.

Having the funds available to cover the early costs of an appraisal, title search, and document preparation allowed this project to move from a proposal to a project. Thanks to our members, the Buck Land Acquisition Fund, the Tiadaghton Audubon Society, the Charles Knox and Margaret



(Above and below): Wetlands being transferred to PA State Game Lands 313



Etner Foundation, the Ernest L. Sweet and Mildred Roberts Sweet Foundation, and the Packer Foundation for their financial support.

Lake Mokoma Spring Fundraiser a Fun Sunday

Thank you to Jim and Annabelle Rogers who graciously hosted NPC friends, members and Board at their lakeside lawn on Lake Mokoma in Laporte on June 12 for the Spring Fundraiser. Although it was a little windy, everyone who attended had a lovely afternoon relaxing by the lake and having the chance to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

The food provided by the Laporte Fire Company and Board members was a hit and a few recipes were exchanged amongst the guests. Winners of the Chinese auction took home some great items like a flowering basket, butterfly bush, hand-knotted necklace, Outdoor Patio basket with grill, walking stick, and wood crafted beverage carrier. Perennial plants were also on sale for those starting their outdoor summer projects.

Many guests took the opportunity to take a little walk and watch as Dr. Jon Niles and students from Susquehanna University's Freshwater Research Initiative conducted water quality sampling on Conklin Run, which NPC acquired in 2003 in for the transfer to the Mokoma Conservancy. It was a warm, windy day filled with food, fun and a little education. Thank you to all that attended and supported NPC at the Spring Fundraiser!



SU's Dr. Niles and students demonstrating electrofishing on Conklin Run to the Spring Fundraiser attendees



Examining the fish in the bucket that were caught from electrofishing on Conklin Run



Enjoying Lake Mokoma and chatting on the dock



Food and friendship during the Spring Fundraiser

Pre-Construction Fish and Macroinvertebrate Sampling, or, Proving It Works

The stream restoration projects are rolling along. Susquehanna University's RK Mellon Freshwater Research Initiative (SUFRI), under the supervision of Dr. Jon Niles and Mike Bilger, is sampling sites before any in-stream work is done at several new sites and re-sampling sites that had construction work done in 2014 and 2015.

The data on fish species found and macroinvertebrates present before construction will be compared with data collected 1-year post construction and 2-years post construction. This will allow the SUFRI researchers to determine if the log vanes, mudsills, and random boulders are decreasing the sedimentation and increasing aquatic habitat.



Dr. Niles, David and James collect some basic information before starting.

This research will help document what observation is already showing – the techniques work. The goal is to have science that demonstrates this (and to be honest, Dr. Niles's PhD) to help funders know that their investment in the projects will achieve what they want – cleaner water and



more habitat.

When they sample a site they begin by walking the site and reviewing where the fish habitat/stabilization structures will be placed. Researchers collect some basic information - the water's temperature and the conductivity.



As the group walked down the stream, two students worked the electrofishing backpacks while Dr. Niles and two other students netted the stunned fish.

One of the research team members has a tape measure and ties it off on a tree or shrub along the stream bank so they know when they have walked and sampled the entire 100 meter stretch.

They start with sampling fish by sending an electric charge into the water to stun the fish using the electrofishing backpack. The charge isn't enough to kill the fish, just "stops them in their tracks" for a second or two. With nets at the ready, the students scoop up the fish and 'store' them in buckets filled with water. As the buckets fill up with fish, they take the buckets to a larger, water filled sorting bin and transfer the fish to the bin. An aerator is on the bin to help the fish breathe while they're in the bin.



After electrofishing, the team gathered back at the sorting bin and they began taking the fish out, one by one, and identifying them.

After the entire 100 meter stretch is electrofished, the team gathers back at the sorting bin. They began taking the fish out, one by one, and identifying them. A tally is kept, listing how many of each type of fish. Once identified and tallied most of the fish are returned to the stream.

The trout get a little extra attention before they go back home. They are also weighed and measured. The trout information has specific uses and relates to other research the team from Susquehanna University has underway. The trout are returned to the stream as soon as possible to reduce the stress on the fish.

After the fish are tallied, the students collect



Measuring the fish

macroinvertebrates using kick nets. Basically the students have a very fine net (close weave to hold lots of small stuff in the net while water goes out) on a long pole. They hold the pole with the net in the water and shuffle or kick their feet to stir up the muck and debris on the stream bottom.

They scoop as much of the stuff as they can in the net. From the net it gets dumped in a special bucket. The bucket has a wire mesh bottom instead of a solid bottom. More water is used to rinse the sample before they are dumped into jars and taken back to the lab.

The samples are preserved at the lab and will be processed this Fall and Winter. Students will sort through the material collected and pull out all the "bugs." These macroinvertebrates are used to help determine the water quality. Most macroinvertebrates are particular about the conditions they're willing to live in – the temperature, the conductivity, how much phosphorous can be in the water, etc. Looking at the bugs that live there gives you a good idea on the overall water quality in that stream segment.

As we get updates and information from the team at Susquehanna, we'll continue to update you on what they're finding in the stream, and how effective the instream projects are.

***If you have included the
Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy
in your will,
please let us
know so that
that we may
thank you
during your
lifetime.***



Kayak or Stand Up Paddleboard


After a little rain at the start the July 16, 2016 kayak trip with Canoe Susquehanna from Watsontown to Milton was a fun time! Thank you to everyone who joined us that day.



David (above) and Deborah (below) Tegea enjoy the NPC Canoe Susquehanna



Did you know NPC can accept credit card payments on line through PayPal? You don't need to have a PayPal account, just your credit card information. You can use this to register for events, to make donations, and to set-up a recurring monthly payment if you like to spread your gift out over the year.



Conservation Easement Visits Underway

Here are a few things Charlie has seen this year during his visits....



Hemlock forest on the Kohler Easement



Mitigation wetlands on the PPL Wetland Easement



Stone wall on the Bednar Easement

DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS • May 1, 2016 to July 31, 2016

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*Thank You...
to all those who
continue to support
the work of the
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Loyalsock Creek Rivers Conservation Plan

NPC is one of the partners working on a Loyalsock Creek Rivers Conservation Plan. With support from our members, we're working with the Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association, Sullivan County Conservation District, Lycoming County Conservation District, Loyalsock Creek Men's Club, Lycoming College's Clean Water Institute, Lycoming County Planning, Sullivan County Planning, and Susquehanna Trout Unlimited to examine how to maintain, enhance, and improve the Loyalsock

Creek Watershed.

Public meetings were held in April to find out what residents, landowners, and recreationists in the watershed think. The Steering Committee is still looking through the notes and questionnaires from those meetings. In a quick analysis it appears the responses to the question, "Are there things you'd like to do that you currently can't?" have a lot to do with access (to the Creek or trails) and managing conflicting uses. The question, "What do you think

is the greatest threat to the watershed?" is answered with a lot of concerns about habitat change (this includes invasives) and the watershed's character.

More public meetings are being planned for this fall. We'll also provide updates in NPC's newsletter.

