

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

Cavanaugh Access Dedication Held

Wow. The turnout for the Cavanaugh Access dedication was amazing!!! We thought 10 to 15 might show up, but were pleasantly surprised as that number grew. And grew. And grew some more. The head count at the event was over 100!!!

The weather on August 8 couldn't have been better. It was sunny, a bright blue sky, with a slight breeze. The kind of day that it's pleasant being outside.

However, a couple days before the event, a wind storm blew thru causing tree limbs and branches to cover the access and block the Pine Creek Rail Trail. As they have throughout the project, the staff of the Tioga State Forest jumped into action and got everything cleaned up on Monday. For some perspective on how much "stuff" there was, it took multiple trips with the District's dump truck.

But, back to celebrating the amazing project our partners and members made possible.

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A great turnout for the Cavanaugh Access dedication!



Above: Annual crop from Rogers easement.

Conservation Easement Visits

Charlie is almost wrapped up with his annual visits to properties under conservation easement with NPC. These visits help ensure that the

conservation values protected by the conservation easements are being conserved. Here's a sampling of what Charlie's seen since the last newsletter:

ROGERS – The fields of the farm on the Rogers conservation easement produce an annual crop

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Conserving working farms and forests

Save-Our-Susquehanna Helps Improve Water Quality on Turtle Creek

The northcentral stream restoration partnership uses a variety of funding sources to work on stabilizing streambanks, reducing erosion and sediment from entering streams, and implementing projects to improve water quality. This summer one of the funding sources involved was the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Save-Our-Susquehanna fund (SOS for short).

The Union County Conservation District (UCCD) was contacted by a landowner along

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Cavanaugh Access *Continued from front page*

Steve Schopfer, NPC's board Chair, welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of how the project transpired. Steve highlighted the role regional and local groups play in making locally important projects happen on a short timeline.

NPC Board member Roy Siefert retired as the District Forester for the Tioga State Forest, and now serves not only on NPC's board, but also the Tioga County Trail Authority. He explained how various partners helped get the project done. If you've been following our progress in the newsletter you'll remember there was a house on the site. The people in attendance were sitting in what had been the kitchen, through to the side yard.

Grant "Skip" Cavanaugh was introduced and reviewed the history of the property and his family's involvement with the railroad, the celery farms, and the Cavanaugh Access. There were multiple members of the Cavanaugh family there to help us celebrate the access and their family's role in the Marsh Creek valley.

Chris Gastrock, Tioga State Forest District Forester, provided a context for the project. He explained the Trail's position on the landscape and the needs he and his staff hear about from people using the Trail. Chris also recognized his staff who were there for the FANTASTIC job they did. (I am adding the emphasis because they have been so great to work with.)

Chris then introduced the Department of



NPC Board Chair Steve Schopfer & Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn officially open Cavanaugh Access.

Conservation and Natural Resources's Secretary, Cindy Adams Dunn. Secretary Dunn spent part of her career at the Pennsylvania Audubon Society office and recalled when the Marsh Creek Important Bird Area was created and the importance of the property not only for recreation, but wildlife and ecosystem services.

While NPC still owned the property at the time of the dedication, the Secretary and Steve "officially" opened it with the traditional ribbon un-tying.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in celebrating a new access to the Pine Creek Rail Trail, and a new wetland for birders and wildlife to explore.

If you missed the dedication, but want to see some of the highlights Wellsboro Home Page attended and did a great summary video.

<http://www.wellsborohomepage.com/cavanaugh-access-dedication/>

Thank you again to our members and donors as well as Bear Meadow Lodge, Al Buck, Tiadaghton Audubon Society, Pine Creek Headwaters Protection Group, the Asaph Trail Club, Waste Management, and Northern Tier Solid Waste Authority for providing the financial resources to make this possible!

If you get out and use the Cavanaugh Access, tag us in your Facebook photos
#NPCconservancy !!



Some folks took advantage of the beautiful weather to ride their bikes to the dedication.

Conservation Easement Visits

Continued from front page

of hay. During the monitoring visit to the property the bales were neatly lined up along the road awaiting the truck that would haul them away to another farm. The Rogers easement also includes woodland, small wetlands and the scenic views from several public roads.



Above: The Vivani easement beaver pond all but gone.

VIANI – For years there’s been a large beaver pond on Riley Creek which flows through the Viani easement. Most beaver colonies eventually devour all the available food and the animals relocate to a spot that will support them. Apparently that’s what happened to this colony, so the dam has deteriorated to the point that the pond is almost dry. Eventually trees will recolonize the dried-up pond and beavers will move back.



Above: Visscher easement access road.

VISSCHER - This road on the Visscher easement was constructed to aid in managing the woodland. It was well constructed with proper drainage and now supports grasses and other low-growing plants. The good design, proper drainage and vegetation keep heavy rainfall from causing erosion, which would damage the road and deposit silt in the nearby stream. Keeping working woodlands intact is one of ways NPC’s members help conserve this region.



Above: The John F. Logue easement following reseeding.

JOHN F. LOGUE - Shortly before the John F. Logue conservation easement was put in place a new natural gas pipeline was constructed on the property and adjacent to a public road that is the boundary of the property. The landowners required that the pipeline be reseeded with warm season grasses and other plants that benefit wildlife. Warm season grasses are slow to become established, taking several years to produce dense cover. Now, three years later, the tall dense grass provides both wildlife food and cover and prevents erosion on the pipeline right-of-way.

MORGAN VALLEY - Over three-quarters of a mile of Big Run flows through the Morgan Valley Road conservation easement. The stream contains a naturally-reproducing population of native brook

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Above: The Morgan Valley Road easement provides a population of native brook trout.

trout, a species imperiled by habit loss and climate change. The property's hemlock forest and dense stands of native rhododendron shade the stream, keeping the water at the low temperatures required by brook trout. The easement requires that a buffer be maintained along the stream during any forest management activities.

MEXICO ROAD - In Montour County the Mexico Road conservation easement has over 700 feet of Chillisquaque Creek flowing through it. The Creek is adjacent to fields with prime agricultural soils.



Above: The Chillisquaque Creek flows through the Mexico Road easement, supplying water to prime farm land.

This year those soils are growing both soybeans and corn. By conserving working farms, members of NPC also conserve productive agricultural soils and local businesses that provide goods and services to the farming community.



Above: The Shumway property in Bradford County protects the cropland.

SHUMWAY – Speaking of conserving productive farmland, the strip cropping on the Shumway property in Bradford County that is under conservation easement held by NPC protects the cropland from erosion and helps feed livestock on an adjacent farm. This property has been in the same family since shortly after the Revolutionary War; the conservation easement insures that it will remain undeveloped and productive.

If you have included NPC in your will, please let us know so that that we may thank you during your lifetime.



Drones Over Pine Creek at the Tioga County Dinner

What do you call it when you visit three projects made possible because of NPC's members, get to see a drone fly a portion of upper Pine Creek, and have a wonderful meal? NPC's 2017 Tioga County Dinner of course!

The group met at the Pensyl Acquisition (now part of the State Game Land system) and walked out to a viewing blind constructed as a project of the Tiadaghton Audubon Society. From the blind you can see the lower portion of the Homer Webster Acquisition (also now part of the State Game Land system). There were a few "common" birds around, but nothing unusual.

We headed to the Cavanaugh Access (now part of the State Forest system) and took a walk around the field path. There were a lot of crickets, but the afternoon was a little too warm for many bird sightings.

Merlin Benner and his unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV for short, but commonly called a drone) were waiting for us at the Burnin' Barrel in Ansonia. Merlin demonstrated how he and his crews fly a drone. He flew the drone down Marsh Creek for a short distance and back to the restaurant. After a very good dinner, Merlin shared some of the footage collected during the pre-dinner flight and also explained a variety of ways he uses the UAVs to help landowners understand their property, make management decisions, and track changes to their property over time.



Above: Merlin Benner with his drone put on a flying display during the Tioga County Dinner.

Clinton County Dinner Highlights the Pine Creek Rail Trail

Linda Stager author of *The Pine Creek Rail-Trail Guidebook* took the Clinton County Dinner participants on a journey down the Pine Creek Rail Trail. Using her guidebook as an outline, Ms. Stager highlighted the Marsh Creek and Pine Creek valley's cultural history, natural history, as well as where along the Trail you can refill water bottles or purchase ice cream (she mentioned water too, but ice cream is possibly more important).

Dr. George Durrwachter, a founding member of NPC, former board member, and former Chair of the Board was in attendance and part of her presentation, unbeknownst to Ms. Stager. One of the photos she showed was from the village of Cammal in the 1940s. Young George Durrwachter and his buddy Andy were in the photo with the rail line behind them, which is what Ms. Stager was highlighting.

Stella A's as always did a great job with the food. If you didn't make this year's dinner, hopefully we will see you next year.

2017 "Pulse of the Heartland Report" Available in November

The Susquehanna River Heartland Coalition for Environmental Studies (SRHCES) is a collaboration of colleges, universities, non-profits, and government agencies working together on ecological research projects in the watershed of the Susquehanna River and its West Branch. Participants partner across institutions to collect, share, and interpret data.

Every year, the group highlights their summer research projects in a report, "The Pulse of the Heartland." NPC works with a student to interview the scientists, write summaries of their research, and pull it altogether into a single document. This year's report is at the printer and is scheduled to be released at the Susquehanna River Symposium at Bucknell University November 10.



Above: The eroding stream bank visible on the left hand side of the stream.



Above: The single log vanes used to stabilize the left stream bank.

Save-Our-Susquehanna... *Continued from front page*

Turtle Creek in Union County about his farm and barnyard. Some of his neighbors have already worked with the partnership and he has seen the improvements progress and the stream become clearer.

After a site visit with the landowner, the UCCD scheduled a visit with staff from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). The three organizations were in agreement the site could benefit from streambank stabilization practices and was within the scope of what the partnership normally does.

Because of the past work the partnership has already done in the Turtle Creek watershed, the group thought the site might be a good fit for SOS

funding. Over the winter, an application was put together, making the case for the project and detailing the anticipated costs. A grant application was submitted. The project was selected for SOS funding and the partnerships added it to the schedule.

Things went well and instead of needing two weeks for construction, it only took one and a half for the streambank stabilization work to get in the ground. The fencing crew that was hired came in the following week and the streambank is stable and the livestock are fenced out of the stream area. Now we just need a few rain showers to get things greened up.

A Beautiful Day to Kayak

Thank you to everyone who came out to kayak! Sunday, August 27, 2017 was a warm, sunny day, perfect for being on the River.

We "sold out" and had Canoe Susquehanna's kayaks filled. The trip to Muncy from Montoursville was fairly quick and the group did a nice job of pacing the trip. The wildlife spotted along the way included several species of ducks and a bald eagle.

It's not too early to start planning for 2018's trip. We're going to the other "side" of summer and holding it on May 27, 2018. You can kick off the summer by paddling with NPC and Canoe Susquehanna.

Did you know NPC can accept credit card payments online 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.



DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS • July 1 to September 30, 2017

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2017 CLINTON COUNTY DINNER

Central PA Auto Auction Inc.

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MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In memory of
Bond "Dick" Brungard
William & Kimberly Van Campen

In memory of Marvin Elliot
Richard & Grace Carey



Thank You...
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River Simulator In Use

An eroding streambank and a flooding stream are kind of hard to watch in real time – it's dangerous to be in a flooding stream channel, and often when erosion is happening, the water is muddy from the soil washing into the stream. So, how can you show people these natural processes at work? Why a river simulator of course!

Thanks to the First Community Foundation

Partnership of Pennsylvania's Bernard and Eva Bredbenner Fund and the Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association funds were secured to purchase a river simulator.

Since it's not obvious what that is, we'll explain. It's a big (3 foot by 8 foot) tray with a drain in it. It sits on metal sawhorses with the top being slightly

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Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

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River Simulator... *Continued from page 7*

elevated compared to the bottom where the drain is. The tray is filled with plastic "sand" and a pump sends water from a reservoir into the top of the tray. Once the plastic sand is saturated, you can take your hand and create a stream channel – straight or meandering (wiggling). You can change the speed of the water entering the system to replicate a high water event or a flood. The water starts to flow through the plastic sand using the channel you create and you can see how the water erodes in some places and deposits sediment in other places.

The focus will be to get the river simulator out and about so kids get a chance to see water at work. The Columbia County Conservation District used it at their Water Education Day in mid-September. Over 491 schoolkids were in attendance and spent some time at the river simulators.

There are also events being scheduled for Lycoming and Montour Counties. Some events will be open to the public, while others will be school field trips. We'll be sharing public opportunities on NPC's Facebook page, and will be looking for opportunities to share the river simulator with groups and organizations.



The river simulator set up at the Waterdale Environmental Education Center.
