



"Protecting and Preserving Lands and Landmarks"

Report to the Membership

Volume 15, Issue 2
Spring 2005

NORTHCENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA CONSERVANCY

Conservation Easement Deductions Under Attack: Please Join the Fight to West Branch Susquehanna River of the Year Designation Given

By the Land Trust Alliance

On January 27, 2005, a report released by the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation shocked the land trust community by proposing major decreases in the federal tax deductions for conservation easements and bargain sales. *The proposal, if adopted, would end the work of land trusts as we know it.*

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA) is engaged in a vigorous response, working with a coalition of national conservation leaders and allies. But to succeed, we need the help of every friend, staff member and board member.

The New Tax Proposals: The Joint Committee has proposed that *deductions for conservation easements be limited to 33% of appraised value. No deduction will be allowed for the donation of an easement on land used for a personal residence.*

The Committee also proposes changing the deductions associated with donations or bargain sales of

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Staff Changes and Strategic Planning

In 2004 NPC began developing a new strategic plan. The board filled out questionnaires and project partners were asked to attend a work group during the summer. Then in September the board spent two days at Lycoming College discussing and deciding what direction NPC should head.

About ten days before the board held their work sessions, Julie Adams, NPC's Development Coordinator, resigned. The timing of Julie's resignation put staff structure on a lot of minds. Toward the end of the second day of strategic planning, Renee Carey was asked to outline what staff structure she would need to accomplish what the board had laid out for a strategic plan.

Carey outlined a new staffing structure. The Executive Director would take over

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Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Michael DiBerardinis named the West Branch Susquehanna River as Pennsylvania's River

of the Year for 2005. The annual designation awarded by DCNR applauds local residents, governments, non-profit and conservation organizations working to improve waterways and the quality of life in their watersheds across the state.

As you may know, NPC coordinated the effort to develop a river conservation plan for a 75-mile segment of the Lower West

Branch (Farrandville to Northumberland) and listed that segment on the Pennsylvania River Registry in 2004. NPC and some of its partners provided DCNR with letters supporting the West Branch as this year's river of the year.

In announcing the designation Secretary DiBerardinis explained that, "The Susquehanna's West Branch ... (links the) natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources along the 500-mile corridor of the

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...and more!

Membership Activity from 1/15/2005 through 3/29/2005

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 and show YOUR support to them.

American Kestrel **(\$500-749)**

Alpine Club of
Williamsport
Lycoming County
Conservation District

Lycoming County Planning
Commission
Susquehanna Chapter
Trout Unlimited
Woodlands Bank
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(Tiadaghton)
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Larson Design Group
Bald Eagle Township
Clinton County
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Sovereign Bank
Stubler Enterprises, Inc.
Wheeland Lumber Co., Inc.
Woolrich Inc.
Zimmer Insurance Agency

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GENERAL MEMBERS

Black Bear (\$500-999)

George and Shirley
Durrwachter
Tom Corbett
Alan Viani &
Jane Morgenstern
William Heffner III

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Rick Matukonis
Bob & Nell Carnein
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Ruth Ann Van Horn
David & Louise Stone

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Marilyn G. Ruhl
James & Elizabeth Lazorka
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Judith E. Styracula
Louis Winner Jr.
Malcolm Barlow
Pine Creek Preservation
Association
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Wade Spicer
William & Nancy Pfeiffer
William & Sarmite Judson

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Carolee & Dick Thatcher
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White Pine (\$25-34)

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Skip Heller
Stash & Helene Nawrocki
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Trinity Parish
Wellsboro Area
Chamber of Commerce
Woody Wagner

ANNUAL APPEAL **SINCE 1/14/05**

Chris B. Dwyer
Franco's
Lamar Advertising
John E. Person, Jr.
Sovereign Bank
Chris Young

ADDITIONAL **CONTRIBUTIONS**

Memorials

Evelyn Bodle by George &
Shirley Durrwachter

Honorariums

Rebecca Burke by Woody
Wagner

Donations to Alfred & Helen Buck Land Acquisition Fund

Alfred Buck

OTHER DONATIONS

Loyalsock Creek
Watershed Memorial Fund



Are We in Your Will?

Remembering NPC in your will can be a way to leave a legacy to future generations. If you will a gift to NPC, please be sure that you have designated your gift to "Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy," federal employee id number 23-2606163. There are many organizations that use the word "conservancy", so please include our full name to ensure that your wishes are carried out as you intend.

New Land Protection Specialist Hired NPC Participates in Coalition

In February of this year Nellie Bhattarai (pronounced “bought-a-rye”) joined the team at NPC as a new full-time Land Protection Specialist.

Nellie grew up with parents Galen and Bonnie Ingram and three younger siblings Hannah, Jesse, and Jamie on a farm in the hills behind Clarkstown. Nellie’s 13 years in the East Lycoming School District were followed by four more years of study at Penn State University in the Agricultural Sciences. Her bachelor degree is in Environmental Resource Management with a minor in Science/Technology/Society. Much of Nellie’s free time in college was spent playing the trumpet in the Blue Band and being heavily involved in Christian Student Fellowship. Nellie’s technical experiences include: wetland seed bank project; internship with DEP, water protection; Juniata watershed wetland status field research; and mushroom lab cultivation and harvesting.

Four months after her May 2002 graduation from Penn State, Nellie began two years of Peace Corps service as a Soil Conservation Extension volunteer in Nepal. She lived in a rural part of the country and worked with the Nepali people at the community and individual level. Together they built stable stone community pathways to replace their eroding soil paths, built chimneys onto their mud cooking stoves to direct the harmful smoke away from their families and increase stove efficiency, built a biogas plant to utilize the methane (used as a cooking fuel) produced from the anaerobic decomposition of animal and human waste, and began family-sized cultivation of mushrooms and cardamom.

And now, back in the area she grew up, Nellie has found a place with us at NPC. She looks forward to meeting and working with you!

“The Susquehanna River is the lifeblood of the West Branch Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania.”

With the one-year designation, the West Branch will be the subject of a June Rivers Month poster, and an annual River Sojourn will be sponsored by DCNR and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. The West Branch Sojourn, set for June 2-6, will travel from Keating (Clinton County) to Williamsport (Lycoming County).

If you can’t make the Sojourn in June, try one of our kayak outings in July or August! The Susquehanna River Heartland Coalition is also planning a summer meeting to update the community on the river’s health and what it is doing to monitor the river’s quality. ❖

Started in 2004, the Susquehanna River Heartland Coalition for Environmental Studies (SRHCES) is a collaboration composed of college/university faculty and representatives from local government and community organizations. The group works together to research and improve water quality and address other environmental concerns related to the Susquehanna River watershed. Faculty partners have expertise in biology, environmental science, geology, and other scientific and liberal arts studies. The following is a full list of participating organizations: Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, Bucknell University, Central Pennsylvania Forum for the Future, Kings College, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, Lycoming College, Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, SEDA-Council of Governments, and Susquehanna University.

NPC was asked to participate because of its work on the Lower West Branch Susquehanna River Conservation Plan, and the role land conservation plays in improving and maintaining water quality. The group is planning to hold a summer open house to provide the general public with information and an overview on the river’s health. If you are interested in being contacted by e-mail when the meeting is set, please send a message to events@npcweb.org and we’ll notify you as more information becomes available.

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Big Pine Trail Hike: August 13

This August 13th hike will follow the Big Pine Trail through the Tiadaghton State Forest’s Miller Run Natural Area. The trail parallels Pine Creek from Jersey Mills to Cammal, sometimes close to the shore and sometimes high above the stream. Along the way we will pass through NPC’s Fisher Tract project – a NPC coordinated acquisition that became part of the Tiadaghton State Forest.

We will take a look at an old flagstone quarry, as well as check out some of the work the Civilian Conservation Corps did in the 1930s, and visit part of the grade of the Cammal and Black Forest Railroad – maybe even glimpse a river otter or black bear.

If Pine Creek is low enough we will wade across at the end of this five mile hike, so bring old sneakers if you don’t want to get your good boots wet. Don’t forget to bring your lunch!



NPC Birthday Bash: A Fun-Filled Celebration

Thank you to all the members who attended NPC's 15th Birthday Party and Open House! Over 200 people came to visit with NPC's staff, board, and volunteers. The evening was a great opportunity to meet supporters we have never met, and to introduce our organization to new people.

Ken Hunter displayed his art and was on hand to discuss his work, and Ron Beach provided artwork as well. The meeting room was filled wall to wall with wildlife and scenes of Pennsylvania's streams and forests. For at least one evening, NPC housed the best collection of wildlife art around!

Thank you to Wegmans and Pepsi for donating the evening's refreshments. The group of young NPC supporters who congregated in Nellie's office reported that the cake was great. Thanks also to Gail Zimmerman and Fish Real Estate for the moving van that served as storage for the meeting room furniture. Winstraw Cards and Gifts provided help with the decorations and

4 Lycoming County Planning loaned us easels to help with our displays. The sisters of Gamma Sigma Delta provided their time and talent at the face painting station. Thank you to all who contributed to this celebration!

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land by limiting such donations to the owner's "basis"—that is, the cost of the land plus any capital improvements made over the years.

The Impact on Land Trusts: If enacted, these proposals would severely set back land trust's conservation work. Saving land is often the primary motivation for donating a conservation easement, but we know that tax deductions enable many more people to donate.

Please Help *Today*: You must act today, because the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy depends on the tax incentives the Joint Committee on taxation has attacked. Letters to your US Senators and Representative asking them to help in fighting these proposals are essential. Your local opinion does count. Draft letters and more information—including how to email or write your elected officials are on the LTA Web Site at www.lta.org. For more information, see <http://www.lta.org/publicpolicy/ppc.htm>. ❖

Pine Creek Watershed Conservation Plan Update

Progress has been made with the Pine Creek Watershed Conservation Plan. The Steering Committee took various required sections and formed a subcommittee to work on each section. A draft of the entire plan was provided to an editor on April 1 and work is now underway to ensure consistency, non-repetition, and accurate spelling.

A series of public meetings are being planned for mid-July to present the draft plan. These meetings are being planned to have an open house format to allow interested individuals to stop in on their way home from work, or when convenient. The plan will be available on-line and in hard copy at various locations throughout the watershed for review. There is a 30-day comment period, so don't worry if you don't have time to read the full plan before the meetings.

After the mid-July meetings and the comment period, the committee will work to edit and update the plan based on the community feedback. The goal is to present the final plan sometime this fall, and complete the plan by the end of the year.

Mark Your Calendars Now: Summer Kayak Outings

Yes, it's time to think of summer and a lazy Saturday spent paddling (well, hopefully more floating than paddling) on the Susquehanna River. This year NPC has scheduled two kayak outings with Canoe Susquehanna. Allen and Betsy will be guiding the trip, providing kayak rentals, and shuttling participants and their boats.

We haven't set the river segments we'll be paddling, however each trip will cover a different section of the river somewhere between Montoursville and Northumberland. I know that isn't very specific, but we're discussing several segments and haven't made a firm decision yet.

The first trip will be held July 16 and the second trip is planned for August 27. If you are interested in having your name on the e-mail list for more information, send an e-mail to events@npcweb.org. We will provide more details as we begin to firm things up.



NPC Celebrates Fifteen Years of Conservation

The following letter from NPC Chairman of the Board, George Durrwachter, DMD, appears in the Fifteenth Anniversary Booklet that is available to all NPC members. If you do not receive your publication in the mail, please contact the NPC office.



As you look and read through our accomplishments over the last fifteen years, THINK what might have happened had the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy not been formed. The more than 9,000 acres we conserved could have been developed and the open spaces they represent gone forever.

We are very proud of our past record, however, it is so exciting to look forward. We have much more to do. Not only is the work in land protection, but we also want to educate people about what we do. In other words, let's get our story told!

This amazing success story could not have been told without the initial support of the Williamsport-Lycoming Chamber of Commerce and the financial support of the First Community Foundation of Pennsylvania (formerly the Williamsport-Lycoming Foundation) and the many participating partners. It goes without saying our staff has been outstanding; we have a very dedicated and diverse board, interested land donors and, of course, many committed contributors who support our mission with their dollars.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for your financial support over the years and trust that you will continue to be a generous proponent of the Conservancy because developmental pressures will not lessen as we move into this new century. Future generations will thank you for your generosity and I personally thank you too.

Signed,

Dr. George A. Durrwachter, DMD
Chairman of the Board

Annual Celebrity Waiter Night Event Another Success

NPC's annual Celebrity Waiter Night 2005 was again a successful event for the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy. The Herdic House owners, Gloria and Marsha Miele, and their staff were extremely helpful and did a great job of keeping the Celebrity Waiters on track, on task, and the food on the tray.

This year's event featured Rick Mason (PennDOT), Rick Gahr (attorney-at-law), Mark Shuman (Clear Channel Communications), John Best (formerly of Buckeye Pretzel), Ed Alberts (Ralph S. Alberts Company), Jerry Walls (Lycoming County Planning), Dr. Bill Judson, Sam Judson, Mike Wolf (Textron Lycoming), Dr. Angie Haas (Susquehanna Health System), Jack Kramer, and Brian Haas (Jersey Shore Hospital and former NPC board member).

Blair Brothers Goldsmiths donated a yellow gold bracelet set with 3 rhondolite, cabochon garnets. The item was raffled off that evening with Linda Alberts being the lucky winner.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the evening a success!!

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fundraising, membership programs, and continue with administrative functions and some land protection work. The other full-time position would be a land protection position, focusing on achieving the conservation goals set out in the strategic plan. The two part-time positions would remain the same, a bookkeeper/administrative person (Connie Livingston) and a land stewardship person monitoring the easements (Charlie Schwarz).

The search for someone to fill this new full-time position began. NPC received over 100 resumes in response to its advertising. Interviews and discussions were held for months before someone was brought on board, Nellie Bhattarai. (see related article on page 3.)

We're glad to have Nellie and her experience on staff, and hope you get a chance to meet her at the Annual Dinner. Be sure to read the article she wrote introducing herself.

Staff is working on preparing a document for our members outlining NPC's strategic plan. Watch for more information in the mail. ❖

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

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570-323-6222
<http://www.npcweb.org/>

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2005 NPC Events



Spring is finally here! Check out the events and outdoor opportunities that NPC is offering in the months ahead.

Ruth Rode and Charlie Schwarz will be leading the hiking outings listed below.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| May 15 | Jacoby Falls Hike |
| May 18 | Annual Dinner |
| August 13 | Big Pine Trail Hike (Jersey Mills to Cammal on the west side of the creek) |
| October 16 | Loyalsock Canyon Vista with the Alpine Club |

For more information on these events or to sign up, contact us at events@npcweb.org or call 570-323-6222.

NPC's 2005 Annual Dinner to be Held at Area Restaurant

The Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy's Annual Dinner for 2005 will be held on Wednesday, May 18, at DiSalvo's in Williamsport. This year we will again have a silent auction as part of the evening's festivities.

More information on the silent auction the items to be included are available on our website. Please see <http://www.npcweb.org> for more information.

"The Conservancy is doing an outstanding job by protecting lands having special scenic or historic attributes. One seminal example: the acquisition – at public auction – of lands abutting Worlds End State Park preserved the integrity not only of the park but also a segment of the Loyalsock Trail."

~Holmes Yealy

[Quote taken from NPC's "Fifteen Years of Conservation" publication. See page 5 for more information.]