

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

Cavanaugh Access Project Underway

The Pine Creek Rail Trail currently runs 62 miles from Wellsboro Junction in Tioga County to Jersey Shore in Lycoming County. The Trail is on the rail bed that once hauled celery, lumber, and ginseng from the region to markets throughout the world. The Trail is popular with tourists, Boy Scout Troops earning bicycling badges, and local residents staying healthy by biking and walking.

While the Trail is a wonderful way to spend part of your day, people have identified a need at the northern end of the Trail. People have said they'd like to have a place to sit and watch wildlife, as well as just take a break to enjoy the day. In this stretch the Trail runs along Marsh Creek and a large wetland complex. The Trail is bordered on both sides by private land with the Bureau of Forestry in charge of maintaining the Trail.

Back in October there was an opportunity to purchase 132 acres along this stretch of the Trail. The property was being sold at a court ordered auction. When the Tioga State Forest staff saw the auction sign they quickly called their central office in Harrisburg to see if there would be some way to buy this property.

Staff from Forestry's central office called NPC's office. There isn't a way for the state to attend an auction and buy properties. The rules, systems, and laws in place require various state

offices and state departments to review sale contracts for real estate. As you can imagine it takes time for these multiple reviews to take place.

NPC talked to the staff from Harrisburg on a Monday. The auction was set for a Thursday. Yep, NPC had 72 hours (almost to the minute) to

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Why "Cavanaugh" Access?

You may wonder why the project is being called the "Cavanaugh Access." Well, Earl Patrick

Cavanaugh ("Pat") and Elsie Belle Colony Cavanaugh bought the property in 1939 from the George Adamy Estate and lived there for many years.

At the time they bought the property Pat worked on the crew of a pusher engine for the railroad.

The crew worked a steam engine and would often wait on the siding at Tiadaghton for heavy freight trains or slow moving trains to come through. As the freight train passed the Tiadaghton siding, the pusher engine would attach to the back of the freight train and use the power of the pusher engine to help push the freight train up the grade.

In a recent conversation with Dr. George Durrwachter, he explained that pusher engines helped trains for many reasons. Dr. Durrwachter grew up along Pine Creek and the railroad at the

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Conserving working farms and forests

Cavanaugh Access *Continued from front page*

figure out if the property had conservation value and if NPC could buy it.

Because of the support NPC receives from you, the members and donors, the organizational systems were in place to allow staff to research the conservation values, visit the property to document its condition, gain board approval of the project and authorization to bid, attend the auction, and be the high bidder!!!

57 days after that initial conversation with Forestry's Harrisburg staff, the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy took title to an amazing 132 acres!!

With your continued support we're now working toward conveying the property to the Bureau of Forestry and preparing the property to become an access point to the Pine Creek Rail Trail.

The property's ecological features include wetlands along Marsh Creek. The wetlands are extensive, fed by Canada Run, and close to wooded areas. This allows wildlife to use the wetlands and Creek by moving from the forest to the stream and wetlands and back.

Marsh Creek is a major tributary to Pine Creek. Marsh Creek meanders and bends through this property for nearly one mile. This Creek and its

associated wetlands are a huge sponge that provide water year round that helps keep Pine Creek's water cooler in the summer.

The property's location is part of its recreational attributes. Because it's almost exactly halfway between the access near Pag-Omar Farm Market/Wellsboro Junction and the Ansonia Access near where Marsh Creek enters Pine Creek, the Bureau of Forestry plans to create a parking area and access to the Pine Creek Rail Trail at the Cavanaugh Access property. A few benches will be added to the property to allow bikers, hikers, walkers and wanderers a place to sit, rest, and enjoy the day. Forestry will eventually create a walking trail to allow people to see more of the wetlands, and hopefully see more wildlife.

There is some work to do before the property becomes useable as the Cavanaugh Access. There is household debris on the site and a house that isn't in great shape. These need to be cleaned up and removed from the property before a parking area, benches and walking trails can be constructed. The history of farming, logging, and the railroad adds the potential for some interesting educational opportunities along the Trail and for signage at the parking area.

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



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.



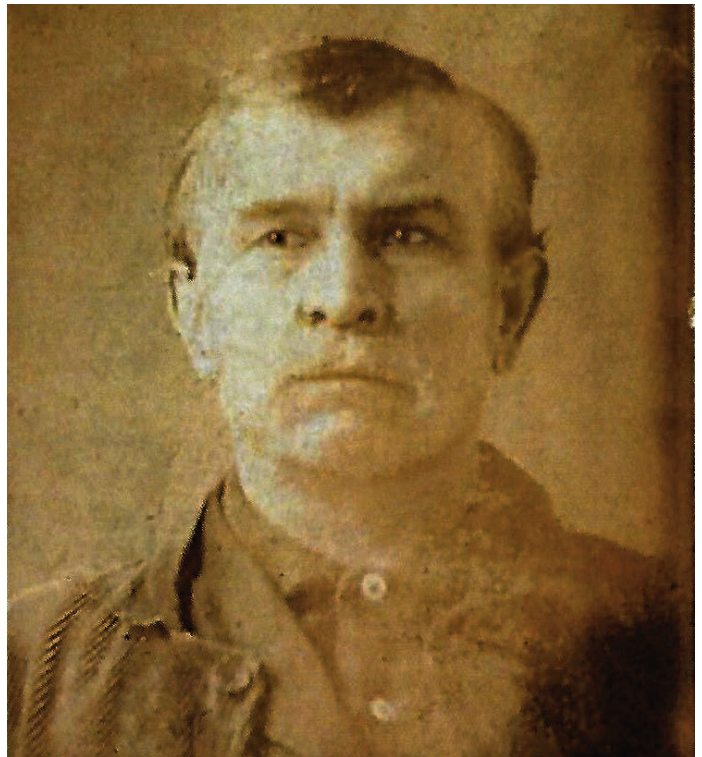
Why “Cavanaugh” *Continued from front page*

village of Cammal. Cammal had a side track to allow one train to pull off so another could pass. The problem was once a train pulled off and stopped it was hard to get it moving again. The pusher crews would help these trains get moving again.

Dr. Durrwachter also remembers watching steam engines work to get started again after stopping at a water tower to refill. As the name implies, steam engines needed steam and used water to create that steam. Water towers were scattered along the rail line so the engines could refill. This meant the pusher engines were needed throughout the rail line to help the heavier trains start moving again after they refilled at the water tower.

While we now walk and bike on the rail line for recreation the railroad had gentlemen whose job it was to walk specific sections of the track each day. These trackwalkers would do minor maintenance themselves, identify larger maintenance needs for the crews to undertake, and work to keep the track clear of rock slides and snow.

The Cavanaugh’s were involved in this aspect of the railroad’s operation too. Pat was named after his father, Patrick Josephus “PJ” Cavanaugh. PJ was a trackwalker for the railroad. His section of the line was from Marsh Creek down to Tiadaghton. He walked down and back everyday to ensure the railroad’s trains could travel safely. Pat Cavanaugh doesn’t just help us honor the region’s rail history, Pat also farmed during this time and helps us understand the region’s farming past. He became a full-time farmer when diesel began to replace steam and the pusher engines were phased out. Pat’s nephew, Grant, remembers a dairy at the property as well as Pat raising hunting dogs.



Patrick Josephus Cavanaugh, born in Cork, Ireland 1861; immigrated thru NY at 4 years old; died 1921 in Delmar Township, aged 60 years.

Farming wasn’t new to Pat. He and his brothers worked on the Adamy and Webster celery farms as kids.

Celery and lettuce was grown along Marsh Creek for decades. In 1901 four families owning land along the Creek entered into a legal agreement pledging to each other to keep the land properly drained and cared for to allow the celery and lettuce farming to continue.

Celery farming was a 9 to 10 month process. In mid-January seeds were planted and kept in “nurseries.” These greenhouses were built out of glass and set directly on the ground. One woman whose father was a celery farmer explained she used a salt shaker to plant the seeds in the greenhouses. She then would go back through with a watering can to set the seeds.

The farmers used steam boilers and wood-stoves to keep the greenhouses warm. The fires

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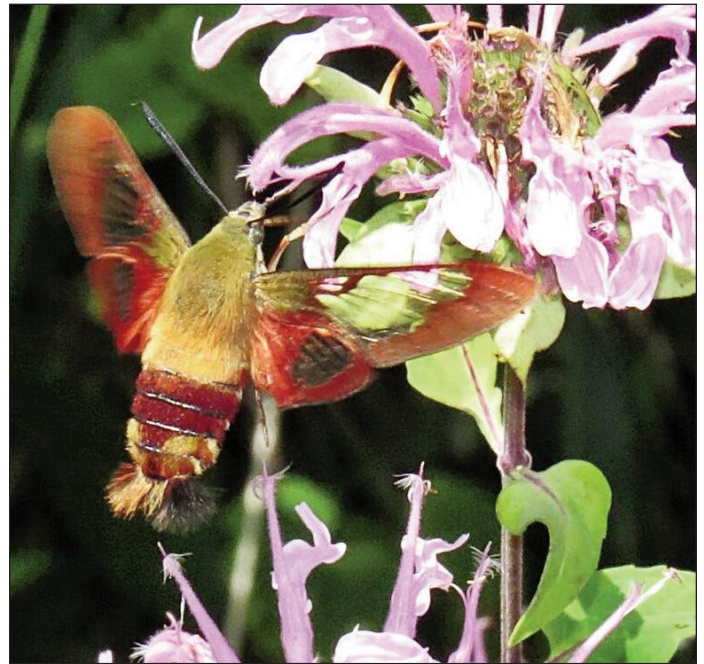
Easement Inspection Highlights

Each year as the conservation easements are inspected there are some interesting things that are observed or occur. Here are some of those from 2016 that didn't fit in the summer or fall newsletters:

June 6: A mink was hunting along a small stream on the Joshi easement, looking for a fish, frog, salamander or something else to eat. Here was an excellent reminder of how important clean water is to wildlife --and humans too. A couple of mouse-like high-pitched squeaks brought it on the run – made me glad that I'm not mouse-sized or the mink isn't the size of a Labrador retriever.

July 11: For the second time, as I was inspecting the Bride Farm easement several hummingbird clearwing moths were feeding on wild bergamot in a meadow. Hummingbird clearwings are day-flying moths that have butterfly-like mouthparts that enable them to feed on nectar deep within flowers. Portions of the wings are, in fact, clear and they act like hummingbirds as they fly from flower to flower. Un-mowed meadows like this one are valuable habitat for many species of wildlife and are increasingly scarce as land is intensively used for row crops or converted to suburban lawns.

September 12: Met with a landowner, their consulting forester and a representative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to discuss upcoming efforts to rid the property of invasive exotic shrub species. As yet, there aren't many invasive shrubs in this woodland, but there are scattered patches of Japanese barberry, autumn



Hummingbird Clearwing Moth

olive, and Japanese stiltgrass beneath the trees. These invasives inhibit reproduction of native tree species and can eliminate wildflowers and other low-growing plants. It's much easier to eliminate them now, when they're just beginning to gain a foothold than after they dominate a site.



Chris Gastrock (Tioga State Forest District Forester), Dennis Ringling (NPC Board member), and Tom Corbett (NPC Technical Committee member) on the Pine Creek Rail Trail at the soon to be Cavanaugh Access.

Why “Cavanaugh” Continued from page 3

had to be tended around the clock to keep the seedlings warm. Pat’s older brother worked as a “fire man” on the Webster’s farm beginning at age 13. The knowledge and experience he gained with the steam boiler on the farm helped him gain employment with the New York Central Rail Road. This greenhouse experience also helped Pat and his work with the pusher engines.

In April or May the seedlings were then moved from the greenhouses outside, to the fields in the wetlands, the Muck. The horse would be outfitted with “muck shoes” before cultivating the field. On some farms the “muck shoes” were blocks of wood strapped to the horse’s feet on other farms it was steel lid covers. The idea was to make a larger surface to distribute the horse’s weight.

After the horses were done, the hand work began. The planting in the fields was done on hands and knees. The person setting the seedlings would use their finger to create a hole in the ground, place a seedling in the hole, and then create another hole six to eight inches away. During harvest, a large knife was used to cut the celery out of the field. The celery was then taken to washing vats. After cleaned, the celery would be crated and staked on rail cars packed with ice. The railroad would set boxcars at designated rail sidings for the farmers to fill. Once the harvest was in and the car filled, the railroad would then hook up the box car and ship the celery.

Pat and Elsie Cavanaugh and their family tie together the railroad and farming legacy of the region. The Cavanaugh Access is a great way to remember the past and work toward a future of walking, biking, wildlife watching, nature photography, and sitting in the sunshine on a beautiful spring day.

Celebrity Waiter Night

Are you ready for a wonderful meal, fabulous service by NPC’s Celebrity Waiters & Bartenders, and fun? Then mark your calendar for **Friday, March 24, 2017** and join us at the Peter Herdic House in downtown Williamsport. Dinner reservations begin at 5:30pm.



Please contact the Peter Herdic House for reservations at 570-320-0165. The tip you leave for your Celebrity Waiter will benefit NPC’s land protection programs and all proceeds benefit the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy.

As of January 25, 2017, we have confirmed Susan Durrwachter, Jason Fitzgerald, Dr. Steven Hawley, Rick Mason, Tony Nardi, Dr. Zachary Ritter, Mark Shuman, and Jerry Walls to be on hand, doing their best to keep you entertained.



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to all those who continue
to support the work of the
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Conservancy

YEAR END APPEAL WRAP-UP

Thank you for helping to conserve this region. Your Year End Appeal, membership, partnership and donations allow NPC to be here, available to work on a variety of land conservation and stream restoration projects for you and future generations. Following is a list of donations received through December 31, 2016. The donations received after this date will appear in the Spring 2017 newsletter.

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Learn More About Pennsylvania's Conservation Past

This winter join NPC, The Pennsylvania Forestry Association, and the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) to learn more about Ralph Abele, Mira Lloyd Dock, Maurice Goddard, and Gifford Pinchot. All four Pennsylvanians are recognized as leaders in PA and nationally in the conservation movement.

PPFF is allowing us to borrow the documentaries for a series of free showings. To learn more about these conservation leaders you can visit the Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage website (<http://paconservationheritage.org>) for short biographies of these and other conservation leaders. Each date will show some combination of documentaries, but not all the documentaries.

- **February 10, 2017** - 7:00pm, Montour Preserve, Danville - Partnering with the Montour Area

Recreation Commission (MARC) – Dr. Susan Rimby a biographer of Mira Lloyd Dock will be attending.

- **February 15, 2017** - 7:00pm, Victoria Theatre, Blossburg - Partnering with the Tioga County Partnership for Community Health and the Tioga County Countryside Council.
 - **February 23, 2017** - 4:00pm, Mansfield University.
 - **March 5, 2017** - 1:00pm, Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Ulysses - Plan your day so you can visit the museum before or after you watch the documentaries! – Dr. Susan Rimby a biographer of Mira Lloyd Dock will be attending.
 - **March 17, 2017** - 7:00pm, Montour Preserve, Danville - Partnering with the Montour Area Recreation Commission (MARC).
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