

# Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

## Rishel Grove Conservation Easement Completed – Land Along Susquehanna River Conserved

Vera Grove Rishel passed away in 2009. Her wish to preserve her land in the way “the Indians would have inhabited the lands,” was a two-step process. The Estate first donated a conservation easement to the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy, and then donated title to the property to the County.

Vera Grove Rishel studied in London and spent time in Europe, but her heart was always in central Pennsylvania. She and her husband lived most of their lives here and enjoyed living near the Susquehanna River and watching the landscape change with the seasons.

Legion Road runs through the middle of the property. The road parallels the Susquehanna River and is a scenic drive with views of the River and large farm fields. The fields are great areas for birders to catch a glimpse of a variety of birds using the fields and field edges.

A rail line parallels the tow path from the former North Branch Canal through the southern section of the property. The Montour Area Recreation Commission is coordinating the bi-county effort to develop the North Branch Canal Trail using the old

*Continued on page 2*



*River's edge view from Rishel Grove Conservation Easement*

## Projects to Improve Local Water Being Planned for 2018

The stream restoration partnership is already back in action. The first project of the year was wrapped up in February. The guys at the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's stream habitat division had too much time in the office and needed some fresh air, so they spent two days working at a site in Northumberland County.

Since then, there hasn't been any active construction, but lots of site visits, designing, and paperwork. The hope is to complete another four to eight (total of five to nine) in-stream

projects as well as several sites that just need streambank fencing and stream crossings.

We're hoping to post updates on NPC's Facebook page as projects start getting underway. We'll also provide updates in the summer and fall issues of the newsletter.



*Conserving working farms and forests*

## Water Safety Signs Along Pine Creek

Last spring there were two deaths on Pine Creek. Staff at the Bureau of Forestry wanted to take action and try to improve the information paddlers have before going on the Creek. The concern was some people who spend time on the Creek in the summer may not understand conditions are different during spring's higher flows and lower water temperatures.

NPC worked with Pine Creek Outfitters and the Bureau of Forestry to apply for a Pennsylvania Water Trails grant. The grant is to design, fabricate, and install signs that provide water safety information at access points on Pine Creek.

The grant program is administered by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council. Their program covers part of the project's costs and requires the applicant to provide additional funds to “match” the program funds. Pine Creek Outfitters provided these matching funds which allowed the grant application to be submitted.

*Continued on page 3*

## Conservation...

*Continued from front page*

towpath and is actively working now to secure funding to make some of the necessary improvements to make the Trail user friendly. Nearly 1 mile of the Trail will run through the property, allowing views of both the old canal and the Susquehanna River.

According to the Montour Area Recreation Commission's website, construction began on the North Branch Canal in 1828. The canal served as a shipping route and transportation corridor from 1831 until it was decommissioned in 1901. By 1901 railroads made the canal obsolete.

During its operation, the North Branch Canal carried raw materials and products such as anthracite coal, pig iron, limestone, brick, lumber, and farm products. It also connected the river towns and carried news and gossip.

The canal is a linear channel paralleled by an elevated towpath. Structures such as locks, stone retaining walls and aqueducts are found all along the canal's channel.

The Estate donated a conservation easement on the property to NPC as part of the process of settling Vera's estate. Once the conservation easement was complete, they then donated the property to the County because of the North Branch Canal Trail traversing the property.

"Vera would be thrilled to know Columbia County owns the property and will be keeping it in its natural state. She enjoyed the property's history especially knowing Native American Indians used to travel the banks of the Susquehanna," said Executor Andrew Pruden.

Columbia County Commissioner Chris Young commented, "There are a lot of birds that use the River during migrations. This property will give people a place to take a walk, enjoy the River, and watch for wildlife. The property has fields that are used year round by hawks and other raptors hunting from the trees at the edge."

"We're looking forward to the full length of the

North Branch Canal Trail being open. The Project is a great opportunity to create a walking and biking trail linking Catawissa to Danville," said Commissioner Rick Ridgway.

Commissioner David M. Kovach added, "The trail won't just link communities, but it will increase recreational options for residents of Columbia County, provide economic benefits to businesses in the County, and connect people to the history of the Susquehanna River and the historic North Branch Canal."

Keep an eye on NPC's email blasts and future newsletters. There may be an outing along the Trail later this year.

## Start Your Summer Off Paddling with NPC

You can kick off the summer by paddling with NPC and Canoe Susquehanna. We're going to be paddling on May 27, 2018. We'll be meeting at 1:00pm and getting off the water around 5:00pm (it may be earlier, it may be later).

This trip is 7 river miles between Montgomery and Watsontown with an island rest stop mid-way. We'll meet at the Montgomery River Access a few minutes before 1:00pm. Canoe Susquehanna will distribute the gear and review paddling instructions.

During the trip we will see remnants of the canal, a peregrine falcon nesting site (which may or may not be in use), an old railroad bridge, and parts of a WWII-era dam (the dam that provided water for the munition factory at Alvira, near Allenwood).

When the trip ends in Watsontown, Canoe Susquehanna will provide a shuttle bus ride back to the vehicles at Montgomery.

The cost is \$45.00 per person if you plan to use a Canoe Susquehanna kayak, and \$35.00 per person if you bring your own equipment (your boat must have a current launch permit/sticker).

Reservations are required. Please email **[Mail@PaddleHappy.com](mailto:Mail@PaddleHappy.com)** or call 888-524-7692 (local: 570-524-7692) for details and to book your spot!

## Snow Slows Start to Conservation Easement Site Visits

Charlie Schwarz got one of his conservation easement site visits in during March. He had more scheduled for Monday, April 2, but a couple inches of snow came down and covered the ground. Stay tuned for an update on what he's seeing in this year's visits.



*Rishel Grove Conservation Easement river front*



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In memory of Leigh Sterns Travis  
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In memory of Ronald Travis  
Alissa DuBois

In memory of Dave Colley  
Alissa DuBois

In memory of Barbara M. Kilgus  
Tom & June Zimmerman

## Water Safety... *Continued from front page*

The design and fabrication are done. The Pennsylvania Wilds Recreation Forester for the Bureau of Forestry oversaw this process and is now working with the Forest Districts to get the signs installed.

## Annual Membership Meeting

Make your reservations now for NPC's Annual Membership Meeting. We'll be gathering at the Peter Herdic House on May 1, 2018 at 6:00pm for a cash bar and socializing, dinner will be at 6:30pm, and the membership meeting will follow dinner.

The cost is \$35.00 per person for a Simple Green Salad made with locally raised greens; your choice of either Grilled Herb Marinated Chicken Breast in an Oven-Dried Tomato Beurre Blanc Over Long Grain and Wild Rice, or House Made Falafel with Yogurt-Herb Sauce and Harissa Over Roasted Vegetable Quinoa; and for dessert a slice of Chocolate Mousse Cake.

Reservations are due April 23, 2018 (refunds will not be given after this date). You can RSVP by calling the NPC office at 570-323-6222.

## River Simulator



Thank you to Pennsylvania College of Technology and Girl Scouts in the Heart of Central Pennsylvania for allowing the River Simulator at some of their recent events. And, thank you to the Lycoming County Conservation District for all their help at those events.

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

## Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

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

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## Celebrity Waiter Night

It was a packed house for Celebrity Waiters on March 23, 2018, at The Peter Herdic House Restaurant. Over 100 people came out for drinks or dinner and tipped the local celebrities who were serving guests. Those tips will benefit conservation of the rural landscape and waters.

Thank you to the following local celebrities who volunteered their services:

- Jason Fitzgerald (Penn Strategies)
- Dr. Steven M. Hawley, DPM (UPMC Susquehanna)
- Rick Mason (Rick Mason Photography)
- Tony Nardi (Fish Real Estate)
- Dr. Christine Nolan, DPM (UPMC Susquehanna)
- Peachie O'Connor (Community Volunteer)
- Amie Penfield (Berkshire Hathaway)
- Mark Shuman (iHeart Media)
- Jerry Walls (Retired from Lycoming County Planning)

We also need to thank Nate Hennigan for donating the beautiful, sterling silver "Nature Inspired" pendant with 5.5mm Evergreen Passion Topaz and 14 Ky bezel on an 18 inch wheat chain.



*The crowd flowed into the upstairs dining room.*



*The Celebrity Waiters enjoyed dinner after the guests were served.*