

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy
PO Box 2083
Williamsport PA 17703
570-323-6222
<http://www.npcweb.org/>

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Celebrity Waiter Night!

Thank you to the Peter Herdic House for once again allowing Celebrity Waiters to take over and earn tips for land conservation and the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy! Friday, March 22, 2019 was a fun night with lots of laughter and good-natured teasing.

Over 100 people joined us for dinner, not to mention the crowd that filled the bar. The kitchen staff did a great job of keeping the food moving and the bar kept the drinks flowing.

Thank you to our Celebrity Waiters:

- Lorne Crawford, Crawford Auction Company
- Susan Durrwachter, CNN/Turner Broadcasting
- Andy Harris, Evergreen Wealth Solutions
- Dr. Steven Hawley, DPM, UPMC Susquehanna
- Fred Holland, Esq, Murphy, Butterfield, & Holland
- Rick Mason, Photographer
- Tony Nardi, Fish Real Estate
- Peachie O'Connor, Community Volunteer
- Dr. Zach Ritter, DPM, UPMC Susquehanna
- Mark Shuman, iHeartMedia Williamsport
- Jerry Walls, Planning Consultant



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO DONATED TO THE LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS:

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Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy



2018 Corn remains on the Dickey Farm.

2019 Conservation Easement Site Visits Underway

by Charlie Schwarz

Monitoring of the properties under conservation easement with the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy began in March with visits to three adjacent properties owned by members of the same family. The day was damp and overcast with a bit of snow remaining on north-facing slopes and other areas where the snow had settled in drifts.

Most of the fields on the three properties had been planted in corn last year using no-till methods that avoids the plowing that disrupts soil structure and can easily lead to rapid soil erosion. No-till leaves a lot of leaves and stems on the soil surface, that material breaks the force of falling rain and, as it decays, adds organic matter to the soil, which improves soil health.

Along with the stems and leaves there's always some spilled grain in harvested fields; in this case kernels of corn, some still adhering to cobs and some in the form of individual kernels. That spilled grain attracts wildlife to the easy food source. As I walked through the fields, gray squirrels fled from the open ground to the nearby woodland and up into nearby trees. Once they were safely in a tree some loudly

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Sustainably conserving the rural landscapes and waters

Partnering with Union County Conservation District and USGS

NPC has been working with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), and County Conservation Districts for over 10 years on projects to stabilize eroding streambanks and reduce or eliminate sediment entering streams. The group, referred to as the Northcentral Stream Partnership, has worked at over 140 sites. At each of those sites we saw the stream change for the better as we worked, installing habitat structures.

John Clune is a Hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and was the first Watershed Specialist with the Lackawanna County Conservation

District. John's career path after the District took him to the Del-Mar-VA peninsula where he studied how effective various agricultural practices are at reducing sediment and pollution from entering waterways. When John came to Williamsport and saw the Partnership's projects he also saw the potential to better understand how the structures being used were decreasing the

amount of sediment entering the stream.

John and other staff from USGS are going to be working with landowners, the Union County Conservation District, the DEP, PFBC, and NPC over the next several years to measure how much sediment is being washed away at "unrestored" sites compared to "restored" sites and the few remaining naturally healthy "reference" sites in the watershed.

They'll use three different methodologies to determine how much erosion is taking place and how much sediment is entering the stream system. By comparing erosion at unrestored sites to restored sites the researchers will better understand how much the streambanks soil is kept in place by the

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REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP
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2019 Conservation Easement...

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complained at having their meals interrupted and warned other squirrels about the monster in the field.

In two fields I glimpsed groups of white-tailed deer before they too fled to the forest; in one case three deer, in the other six to eight in a group that was already fleeing before I even saw them. But the real treat of the day was the four different flocks of wild turkeys, three in fields and one in forest. Wild turkeys are typically very wary birds and three of the flocks fled rapidly, two to take flight across the adjacent valleys. The fourth flock leisurely fed across the cornfield scratching for corn, weeds seeds and any worms or insects they could find.



Wild turkeys search for corn and seeds on the Dickey Farm.

Stream Project Planning Underway

The snow is gone, the streambanks are visible, and the new vegetation hasn’t started to green up yet. Yep, perfect conditions to make design visits for this year’s streambank stabilization projects.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission’s (PFBC) steam habitat staff are heading out with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) watershed manager, and County Conservation District staff to visit properties who have eroding streambanks. These visits consist of looking at the areas eroding, discussing what the stream is doing in each area, and making decisions on the structure most likely to stabilize the streambank and stop the erosion.

Once the designs are done, the supply list is pulled together, logistics related to material delivery and staging will be worked out, and the permit applications will be submitted.

The first project of the year will begin in May if all goes as planned. Keep an eye on Facebook for photos and updates from this year’s projects.

Partnering with Union County...

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multi-log vanes, mudsills, and toe logs installed during a stream project.

In addition to John and his colleagues working in Pennsylvania, USGS researchers from the Maryland and the National Research Program are also going to be involved.

One of the methodologies is actually taking physical measurements at sites. A simple way to think of this is to think about researchers measuring things like the height of the bank and the width of the channel. Then re-measuring those sites over time to track how the height or width are changing. If the channel is getting wider that indicates the streambanks are eroding away. Using the previous measurements the researchers can calculate the volume of soil lost. (Thinking back to high school geometry, volume is length multiplied by height multiplied by width).

It will be at least a year until even preliminary results are released. Look for updates about the project in future issues of the newsletter and in our email communications.



This year the members of the stream partnership are going to try and take more photos along the way. This photo was taken during a March site visit. The barn in the background helps provide a reference point. This photo shows the eroding streambank. We will also take photos during and after construction, using the barn to help track and compare and contrast changes to the streambank.

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In memory of Thomas Wood
Barbara Wood

2019 CELEBRITY WAITER NIGHT

The following donations were
made by people unable to
attend the event:
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Charles & Hallie Luppert

2019 DAY AT THE LAKE FOR DAVE COLLEY

Nancy Colley
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Thank You...to all those who
continue to support the work of
the Northcentral Pennsylvania
Conservancy!

Annual Membership Meeting

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy’s 2019 Annual Dinner and Membership Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, at the Peter Herdic House Restaurant in Williamsport.

Please join us for a fun evening of dining and discussion, where we’ll highlight the ongoing conservation work happening throughout the region and chat about what’s next for NPC! This yearly get-together is an opportunity to catch up with your

NPC staff, board of directors, and fellow members while also enjoying a one-of-a-kind dining experience prepared by Liz Miele of the Peter Herdic House.

Socializing will begin at 6:00pm, followed by seating for dinner at 6:30pm. The cost is \$35.00 per person and includes a salad, entree (choice of chicken or vegetarian), and dessert. A cash bar will be available.

The deadline for reservations is April 30, 2019. Contact the office today to reserve your seat!