

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

Autumnal Conservation Easement Visits

by Charlie Schwarz, NPC Land Steward Specialist

In December, after 15 years of service, Charlie Schwarz announced his retirement from NPC. To our dear friend Charlie, thank you for your loyal stewardship of this land we all love so much. You will be missed!

Each of the properties on which NPC holds a conservation easement must be monitored annually. In 2019 most of those monitoring visits were done in the spring, but as in previous years there were still some to be done in fall. Often, because of the distance, or the time spent talking with the landowner, or the acreage, only one visit can be made in a day. At other times, and especially when adjacent properties are involved, it's quite possible to visit more than one property a day.

The last of 2019's monitoring visits took place in mid-November:

Green Hills Farm is located close to Williamsport in an area that has seen pressure for



Landowner George Gard and Charlie walk the Laning Creek conservation easement together.



The John F. Logue conservation easement was visited during peak fall foliage



development. Some of the woodland has never been cleared, some was once cropland that has reverted to woodland and some consists of conifer plantations. Because of the conservation easement, the property will always be woodland and cropland.

The open space, scenic views and wildlife habitat will remain.

One of the joys of monitoring visits is seeing the properties in all seasons. The **John F. Logue** conservation easement was visited at the peak of this year's fall foliage. Part of the property was once a homestead, part was once a beaver pond; it is all in an area dominated by a northern hardwood (beech, birch, maple) forest. The northern hardwood forest is the most colorful woodland in autumn.

The Griffin Hill, Irion and Round Top conservation easements are all owned by the same landowners and the properties are all adjacent; each consists of both woodland and cropland. The ground had a light dusting of snow as I made this, the last of 2019's monitoring visits. The route I've typically followed to monitor these three tracts is somewhat

Continued on page 2



The landowner's dogs join Charlie for a walk around the Irion conservation easement.

Autumnal Conservation ...

Continued from front page

more than four miles long; this year two of the landowners' white German shepherds accompanied me on the route.

Laning Creek is a tributary of the Susquehanna River for which this conservation easement is named; and Laning Creek borders the property. As with most conserved properties, part of the land is cropland and part is woodland. A portion of the woodland is on a relatively steep sidehill above the stream, and that woodland contains beautiful large trees, both hemlock and red oak. Those large, relatively old, trees are important wildlife habitat, providing food and cover to species from woodpeckers to black bears.

In actuality, one annual monitoring visit is the minimum requirement; in the event of an activity that



Multiple visits were made to the Fossil Farm conservation easement this year as a planned timber harvest was underway.

is not routine or in the event of a potential issue, additional monitoring visits are made. Although the annual visit to the **Fossil Farm** property was made earlier in the year, subsequent visits were a necessity. The property's woodland contains a large number of white ash trees which have been attacked by the emerald ash borer. A consulting forester had written a forest management plan and timber harvest plan that had been reviewed and approved by NPC. The trees had been sold and logging began in late November, so additional visits were necessary to insure compliance with the plan and conservation easement – those visits continue as this is being written.



Little Shamokin Creek Watershed Association Honored

NPC honored the Little Shamokin Creek Watershed Association (LSCWA) for their years of service stewarding and restoring the natural resources of the watershed. They were one of the Northcentral Stream Partnership's earliest partners and have continued to help with many stream bank stabilization projects ever since. They also hosted a book signing for Northumberland county native, Matt Miller's, first novel *Fishing Through the Apocalypse*. Thank you, again, to this hardworking group of individuals!

2019 IN REVIEW

★ In 2019 we added the Avis Canoe Launch to our list of conserved lands, bringing our totals to: 11,500+ acres, 48 easements & 20 partnered acquisitions.

★ The Northcentral Stream Partnership celebrated its 10th construction season, and it sure was a busy one at that! The team installed 9000 feet of fencing, completed over 16 acres of riparian buffer plantings, and impacted nearly 5400 feet of stream.



Tree plantings (and those happy cows!) at a restoration site in the Turtle Creek watershed.

★ NPC Executive Director, Renee Carey, celebrated 25 years with NPC, we welcomed Holly Byers to the staff, and wished a very happy retirement to long-time Land Steward, Charlie Schwarz.

★ As we dive into 2020, we look forward to celebrating NPC's 30th Anniversary and hope you can join us for one or all of the new events we have in store. A full calendar of events will be available in the Spring 2020 newsletter.

***None of this would have been possible without members like you!
Cheers to 2019 and a very Happy New Year!***

Click, Follow, Share

You don't have to wait for the quarterly newsletter to learn about NPC happenings! In fact, there are several ways you can stay up-to-date on current events, projects, conservation topics, and the occasional photo of happy cows (one of NPC's most "Liked" photos from 2019!). Here's how:



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NPC Awarded Two Grants to Close Out 2019

Avis Canoe Launch Improvements – In November, the Canoe Access Development Fund awarded a grant to NPC to make improvements to the parking area and install a geocell at the Avis Canoe Launch.

The path from the parking area down to Pine Creek is a compacted dirt path that gets slick when wet, making the walk down to the creek and getting in and out of the creek a little tricky (Reneé can attest to that!). One way to address the mud at the Creek's edge is with a geocell. The Bureau of Forestry and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission have used these at other canoe access points across the state. The geocell is made of a heavy duty material, and when stretched out, it looks like a honeycomb. Stone is used to fill in the "hole" in the honeycomb. The geocell helps hold the stones in place and keeps the stones from squishing down into mud. This will make the access/landing area at the Avis Canoe Launch more pleasant to use, and a little safer. Stone will also be used to improve the pathway from the parking area down to the stream. Right now, there's a gate at the top of the path. The gate will be replaced with a bollard (a single, solid, post). It will be easier for people to carry their equipment past the bollard than around the gate.

Local fire companies use the site to fill tanker trucks. By replacing the gate with a bollard we're also making it easier for them to get the necessary hoses and equipment down to the water, saving them time during emergencies.

The parking area improvements will include more stone to help with mud and some signage. The vegetation will also be cut back and a split-rail fence installed to help visitors understand where the public access is and is not.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy manages the Canoe Access Development Fund. We're grateful for the opportunity to apply and work with one of our partners in conservation!

Plunketts Creek Streambank Stabilization Funded - The Pennsylvania Chapter of Trout Unlimited recently awarded NPC a Coldwater Heritage Program grant to help cover the costs of stabilizing a stretch of



The soon-to-be improved creek access at the Avis Canoe Launch

Plunketts Creek in Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County.

Currently, eroding streambanks are adding sediment to Plunketts Creek and covering the substrate on the bottom. Plunketts Creek is a HQ-CWF (High Quality-Cold Water Fishery) that is also designated as a naturally reproducing trout stream. All of that means, the water quality of the stream is really good and native fish and other aquatic species can live there.

This project will stabilize the streambanks and immediately end the erosion at this site and stop sending sediment downstream. There is some concern that if not addressed these eroding streambanks could

cause the stream to degrade and eventually be considered impaired. By immediately stabilizing the streambanks, we'll eliminate the source of the sediment and over time, the sediment on the stream bottom will flush out of the system.

Plunketts Creek is a relatively small watershed. Most of the headwaters of the watershed is forested with a large section of the stream on State Game Lands. During the 2011 and 2016 flooding the stream experienced at least 500 year floods each time. This caused significant erosion in this stream stretch and the erosion is continuing today.

This project will use a series of log framed deflectors to stabilize the eroding stream bank of Plunketts Creek. Random boulders will also be used in the project to create additional aquatic habitat. Partners on this project include the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association, and several private landowners.

Did you know NPC can accept credit card payments online through Stripe and PayPal?

Did you know NPC can accept credit card payments online through Stripe and PayPal? You don't need to have a Stripe or 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.



Leave a Legacy

Anyone can leave a lasting legacy by naming NPC as a beneficiary in their will or living trust, life insurance, or retirement accounts. It is easy to do and it costs nothing during your lifetime. If you decide to do this, please let us know so we may thank you for this significant gift.

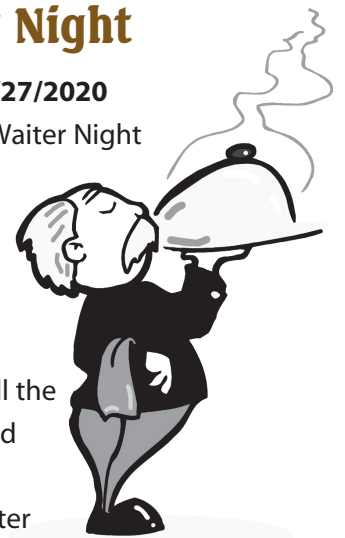


Celebrity waiters, Toni Nardi (Left) and Susan Durrwachter (Right), are all smiles with Peter Herdic House staff, Hannah (Center).

Celebrity Waiter Night

SAVE THE DATE: Friday, 3/27/2020

NPC's Annual Celebrity Waiter Night at the Peter Herdic House in Williamsport is planned for Friday, March 27th! Local celebrities will be seating, serving and mixing up your drinks all night long, while all the tips they earn will be donated directly to NPC. This night is always a TON of fun. The Peter Herdic House is currently accepting reservations, and will be seating tables from 5pm – 11pm. Contact them at 570-322-0165 to reserve your table. The menu and full list of celebrity waiters will be announced soon!



Celebrity waiter, Dr. Ritter, serves up cocktails at the 2019 NPC Celebrity Waiter Night.

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30th Anniversary Celebration & Annual Meeting

With the support of members like you, NPC has been able to proudly serve as your regional land trust for the past 3 decades, helping to conserve the wild and wonderful places that make Northcentral Pennsylvania so special. Now, that's worth celebrating!

We're so excited to host this year's event at the elegant and rustic, Herman & Luther's, in Montoursville. The evening will feature a cocktail hour, live music, a short presentation to commemorate NPC's 30 years and an address to our members, followed by dinner and dessert by the culinary experts at Herman & Luther's. If you are not currently a member, we invite you to join us for this celebratory event as an opportunity to learn more about NPC's work. All are welcome! *NPC members will receive their invite in the mail in March. Non-members, please contact the NPC office at 570-323-6222 or HByers@NPCweb.org to request reservation details.*

You're invited to

NPC's 30th Anniversary Celebration & Annual Meeting

Thursday, 5/7/2020 • 5pm – 9pm
Herman & Luther's, Montoursville
\$40/per person. Cash bar.

