

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy



Robwood Mountain

Last of the 2018 Easement Inspections *by Charlie Schwarz*

Monitoring visits to properties conserved by conservation easements held by NPC were completed in October and November. Each year NPC must visit each conserved property to be sure that the provisions and restrictions of the conservation easements are being followed. Those visits give us an opportunity to meet with the landowners and discuss the easements or any concerns the landowners may have.

The Robwood Mountain easement lies atop Robwood Mountain in Bradford County; it contains over 350 acres of woodland primarily on a north-facing slope. In the fall when north winds rise over the slope hawks and vultures ride the wind on their annual south-bound migration – in this case a red-tailed



Laning Creek



Sustainably conserving the rural landscapes and waters

Ten Months of Stream Projects

Way back in February 2018 there were two sunny and warm (mid to upper 30s) days in a row, so the first stream project of the year took place. The Fish and Boat



Commission guys were so warm they even took their sweatshirts off. *The only thing that was cold on this warm February Stream Project was the pounder.*

Well, nearly 10 months later, the last stream project of the year wrapped up. Unfortunately, the sunny and warm weather wasn't around in November. It was low 30s, overcast and windy with snow forecasted for later in the week (and it snowed several inches at the end of the week).

Several of the late summer and early fall rainstorms were substantial and caused the pace of erosion to increase. After reevaluating the site there was agreement that it made sense to try and stabilize the streambank before winter.

A contractor was lined up and materials delivered to the site early in November. The Montour County Conservation District staff and DEP's Watershed Manager managed to install rock cross vanes, log deflectors, and toe logs over a 2-day period before the snow started.

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Last of the 2018... *Continued from front page*

hawk and a turkey vulture.

Also in Bradford County, the Laning Creek property consists of farm field and woodland. Some of the woodland consists of abandoned farm fields that reverted to woodland and some old fields that were planted with tree seedlings. The landowner is interested in managing the property for wildlife and has established food plots in some of the old fields and along one of the old roads on the property.

There's always something interesting to see during NPC's monitoring visits – what will 2019 hold?

Trees Along Streams

At the end of 2017 NPC applied for a grant to plant forested riparian buffers. The grant was awarded in the spring of 2018 and implementation got underway in December of 2018.

A riparian buffer is the area of ground right along the streambank. The grant is to plant trees and shrubs along the stream to help improve water quality. The trees and shrubs will do this in a couple of different ways.

- The trees' roots will help hold soil in place so it doesn't wash away into the stream, keeping the water cleaner.
- When the stream's water level starts to go up because of rain or snowmelt and spreads into the riparian buffer, the trees and shrubs will slow down the speed of the water. The slower the water is moving, the less likely the water will wash away soil. Slower moving water is also more likely to absorb into the ground, filling the groundwater aquifer.
- The trees and shrubs in the riparian buffer will also help slow down rain water or snow melt flowing across land towards the stream. Again, this slower moving water will have more time to be absorbed and fill groundwater aquifers and is less likely to cause soil to wash away, causing erosion.

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Ten Months of... *Continued from front page*

Unlike the job in February, they weren't shedding sweatshirts because of how warm it was. They were looking in their trucks for more layers to put on.

At least one project a year has equipment hiccups. Of course this was the one. The logs are held in place using rebar. You use a gas powered drill to put a hole in the log and what looks like a gas powered jack hammer with a driving head to pound the rebar in, generally referred to as "the pounder." The gas powered drill was being temperamental, but the pounder was having real fits. This caused some concern since the alternative to the pounder is a human powered sledge hammer.

Pounding the rebar with the sledge hammer is far slower than the pounder (no offense to anyone who has pounded rebar for us with a sledge hammer). Since we knew the snowstorm was a possibility things had to get done in the two-days. Certain things had to be in place so some grading work could get done and things at the site readied for winter before the snow started. We didn't have time to pound all the rebar with a sledge hammer. The pounder managed to get it all done, even with multiple stops and re-starts.

It was snowing when they were loading up and leaving the site, but the work that needed to get done got done. The pounder has already spent some quality time with a mechanic and is ready to go for 2019.



Brooke starting the pounder.



Keystone 25 speakers

Keystone Fund Celebrates 25 Years in Lycoming County

On October 24, 2018, NPC hosted a celebration of 25 years of the Keystone Fund working in Lycoming County. The event, held at the Little League Baseball Museum in South Williamsport, was well attended. Several organization members, as well as municipality and borough staff and administrators, were on hand to witness the event and speak about how the fund supported their many projects. With the support of the Keystone Fund borough projects, building renovations and other administrative needs were filled and completed.

Some of the municipalities supported by the Fund are Montoursville Borough, Muncy Creek Township, South Williamsport Borough and the City of Williamsport to name a few. Organizations sustained by the Fund are The Lycoming County Historical Society, Peter J. McGovern Little League Baseball Museum, and the James V. Brown Library. NPC also received a grant from the Keystone Fund to use on projects such as the West Branch Susquehanna Stewardship and Conservation Plan, as well as the Lower West Branch Susquehanna River Corridor Plan. Also in attendance were Senator Gene Yaw, and Representative Garth Everett who both spoke about the ways in which the Keystone Fund is working in Lycoming County.

Trees Along...

Continued from page 2

Another benefit to slowing water before it flows into a stream is you're giving any dirt or sediment in the water to settle out in the riparian buffer instead of flowing into the stream.

About 3-acres were planted in Montour County in December. There are many more acres in several other counties in the planning stages for 2019.

This is another project of partners. The funding is coming from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Bureau of Forestry's Service Foresters are involved in reviews, the County Conservation Districts are working with interested landowners, and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection are providing input on sites where streambank stabilization work has been done or is being considered. NPC is keeping all the hula hoops moving and the grant funds accounted for.



Biddle 2018



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Looking for invasive vegetation on the John F. Logue easement

Invasive Exotic Vegetation

by Charlie Schwarz

Invasive exotic vegetation has become a major problem in forested and aquatic habitats. They compete with native vegetation and, in many cases, provide little if any benefits to wildlife. Although white-tailed deer and other plant-eaters can severely impact the abundance of native wildflowers, shrubs and tree seedlings, these herbivores usually have a minimal impact on invasive species – if they eat them at all.



Asiatic honeysuckles

Invasive plants are beginning to have an adverse impact on forest productivity by out competing native tree seedlings whenever trees are cut. The worst of the invasives in northcentral Pennsylvania are (in no particular order) three species of Asiatic honeysuckles, Japanese barberry, autumn olive and Japanese stiltgrass.



Japanese barberry

The owners of a 100 plus acre property conserved with NPC are concerned about the invasive species that are beginning to occupy portions of their woodland. Autumn olive that has been growing on the edge of a small field has begun growing in open areas in a recent timber sale. Japanese barberry has been growing in an open area near an old homestead and is spreading into the forest. At the same time Asiatic honeysuckles are now growing on the periphery of a wetland.

In December NPC met with the landowner, a consulting forester, the Pennsylvania Bureau of

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Japanese stiltgrass

Invasive Exotic...

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Forestry's Service Forester, and a field person with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to examine sites on the property where invasive vegetation is becoming a problem. The landowners have contracted with the consulting forester to undertake control of the invasives; part of the cost may be reimbursed under a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This will not be a one-time undertaking since the seeds of the invasive vegetation persist in the soil for several years and seed sources will persist on adjacent properties.

The the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/WildPlants/InvasivePlants/Pages/default.aspx>) notes that invasive plants are those that:

- Are not native to an area
- Spread quickly
- Cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health

They can be:

- Trees
- Shrubs
- Vines
- Grasses
- Flowers

Invasive plants have been brought into areas, and this can happen accidentally or on purpose. They are often referred to as "exotic," "alien," "introduced," or "non-native" species.



Autumn olive

In their natural range, these plants are limited by factors that keep them in balance including pests, herbivores, or diseases. However, when introduced into an area where these limitations are absent, some species can become invasive.

While the species may differ, invasive plants have some things in common that make them aggressive and difficult to control:

- Ability to grow in many conditions
- Rapid growth
- Ability to exploit and colonize disturbed ground
- Ability to thrive in high nutrient conditions (i.e. excess fertilizers)
- Reproduce rapidly by roots and shoots. If spread by seed, produce numerous seeds that disperse and sprout easily
- Having roots and rhizomes with large food reserves
- Ability to survive and reproduce under adverse conditions
- Having high photosynthetic rates – "greening up" earlier in the spring than natives gives these plants an competitive advantage
- Lack of natural predators, pathogens, and parasites

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