

Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

Stream Work Extends into October

Usually, the stream partnership stops instream work at the end of September. A lot of fish species spawn (start the process of reproducing) in the fall. We don't want to be in streams and interrupt that process.

This year, however, the stream partnership completed two instream projects in October in two different streams. Both projects were single day projects and in streams where the fish reproduction was not a concern.

The projects came together rather quickly. NPC's Growing Greener Grants are generally awarded as a block grant. This means we get a lump sum of money and commit to spending the money to implement a list of agreed upon Best Management Practices (BMPs) in agriculturally impaired watersheds. Our grant agreement does not list specific sites and limit us to working at only those sites. This flexibility is huge and allows a lot of really good work to get done quickly.

While the mornings were chilly, the weather wasn't bad this year. A couple years ago we did a project in November and it was snowing while we worked (no exaggeration).

The project also allowed for some additional training for some new staff with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). PFBC has funding from the Environmental Protection Agency to cover staff costs for streambank stabilization work (staff time to select sites, design the project, and oversee construction) in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. One of the new employees spent time working seasonally for PFBC so he isn't new to the work and just needs some experience with site selection and design – things typically done in the offseason. The other two employees are new to the concept and techniques. They are picking

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NPC Executive Director Receives Rothrock Conservationist of the Year Award

NPC is very proud to share that your Executive Director, Reneé Carey, was recently presented the 2020 Dr. Joseph Trimble Rothrock Conservationist of the Year Award by the Pennsylvania Forestry Association (PFA).

"Reneé, has served PFA in many capacity as a board member and volunteer supporting forest, land, and water conservation. In 2019 Reneé celebrated 25 years with the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy where she is currently the executive director. She is widely Respected for her work ethic, passion for conservation, and leadership in the conservation community. The plaque she received read, "Reneé consistently demonstrates her commitment to

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Dr. Jim Finley with PFA presents Reneé with the 2020 Dr. Joseph Trimble Rothrock Conservationist of the Year Award.

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up on things quickly and the opportunity to have a couple more days of in-person, instream training was helpful.

Which is good, because both of these one day projects have turned into something bigger. Both landowners were happy with the work done in October and want to continue to work with the partnership and implement more BMPs. A small success can become a bigger success.

One landowner is already talking to a buffer planting professional to get some ideas for what would work at the site. The landowner is hoping for a spring planting. Buffers provide shade to the streams in the summer which helps keep water temperatures down and the roots help provide further stabilization of the streambank. As one watershed specialist says, "roots are natural rebar."

The other landowner has agreed to more stabilization work. Often landowners have an area on the stream they are concerned about and only want to do work there. As they see the structures go in and the stream respond, they have a better understanding of the techniques and are willing to allow implementation at other areas along the stream.

There was also fencing work done in October. A streambank fence helps keep livestock out of streams and can protect any buffer plantings from being eaten by livestock. A landowner on Buffalo Creek in Union County who had instream work completed in 2018 was ready for the fence to be installed.

After a couple design visits to figure out where gates need to be, the setback from the stream, and how to address some site specific conditions, the fence was installed. The landowner had the installa-



The crew installs mud sills to help stabilize the stream bank at a project site on the West Branch Chillisquaque Creek in Montour County.

tion contractor do some other areas while on site.

We thought we were going to extend into December and get a stream crossing in for farm equipment, but mother nature had other plans and 15 inches of snow fell in the project area about 5 days before we were scheduled to install the crossing. If we get a break in the weather the crossing may go in yet this winter. If not, we're ready for spring and the weather to break.

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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 NPC projects, events, and conservation topics. Here's how:



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NPC Executive Director...

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conservation of land, forests, and water and the communities that depend on wise resource use. She actively seeks partnerships with state agencies, county conservation districts, non-profit organizations, and landowners to protect and conserve natural resources for recreation and jobs today and to allow future generations similar opportunities. She is known for encouraging and guiding people to steward natural resources with the vision to nourish communities. Her passion for this work clearly emulates the values she shares with Dr. Rothrock's concern for natural resource stewardship." - The Pennsylvania Forestry Association

Each year the Association recognizes an individual, organization or group's significant contributions to the public recognition of the importance of Pennsylvania's forest resources in the same tradition and spirit of Dr. Joseph T. Rothrock.

Dr. Rothrock served as the first president of PFA and earned the title, "Father of Forestry in Pennsylvania," through his untiring efforts to promote the forest conservation movement in Pennsylvania.

In response, Reneé thanked those that nominated her for the award and stated, "I am both humbled and honored to receive the Rothrock Conservationist of the Year Award. I have been so proud to serve our communities and help champion the conservation efforts of NPC for the past 26 years. I look forward to many more years to come!"

Bar Bottom

We're almost there. Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy took title to the Bar Bottom property in October. We've worked through some closing details, and the Option to Purchase Agreement between the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Bureau of Forestry was signed by NPC. The document needs reviewed and approved by two state offices outside of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. It's now circulating to those offices in Harrisburg. Before spring arrives, the Bureau of Forestry should officially take title to the property, incorporating it into the Loyalsock State Forest!



Bar Bottom Run meanders through the conserved woodlands.

We'd typically have a section of our winter newsletter dedicated to a 'save the date' for NPC's annual meeting and details on our annual Celebrity Waiter Night fundraiser at the Peter Herdic House, but, of course, we're coming off a very UNTYPICAL year. Since it's still unclear when we'll be able to safely get together for these more traditional gatherings, we're approaching this year's events with a mindset of flexibility. We hope to share more dates and details with you as they develop. In the meantime, NPC's mission remains focused on conserving and enhancing access to the lands and waters across the region for the health and wellbeing of our communities.

A young duo consults their map before setting out to find Jacoby Falls. NPC members helped conserve portions of this trail back in 2001. While the prospect of large, group gatherings is still uncertain for 2021, public access to places in nature like this remain constant, thanks to your membership.



Embracing Winter in PA *by Tamara Wagner, NPC Land Steward Specialist*

Tamara joined the NPC staff in February 2020, eager to get to know all the easement landowners and volunteers ...and well, you know how the rest of the year went! However, Tamara has proven to be very adaptable and worked hard to familiarize herself with NPC's easements throughout the year. From the 150 acres Fossil Farm easement in Tioga county, with its 72 acres of soil considered to be of state-wide importance; to the Rishel Grove easement in Columbia county, a beloved family property of fields, woodland, and frontage on the Susquehanna River – Tamara traveled all over the region, monitoring each of NPC's 48 conservation easements.

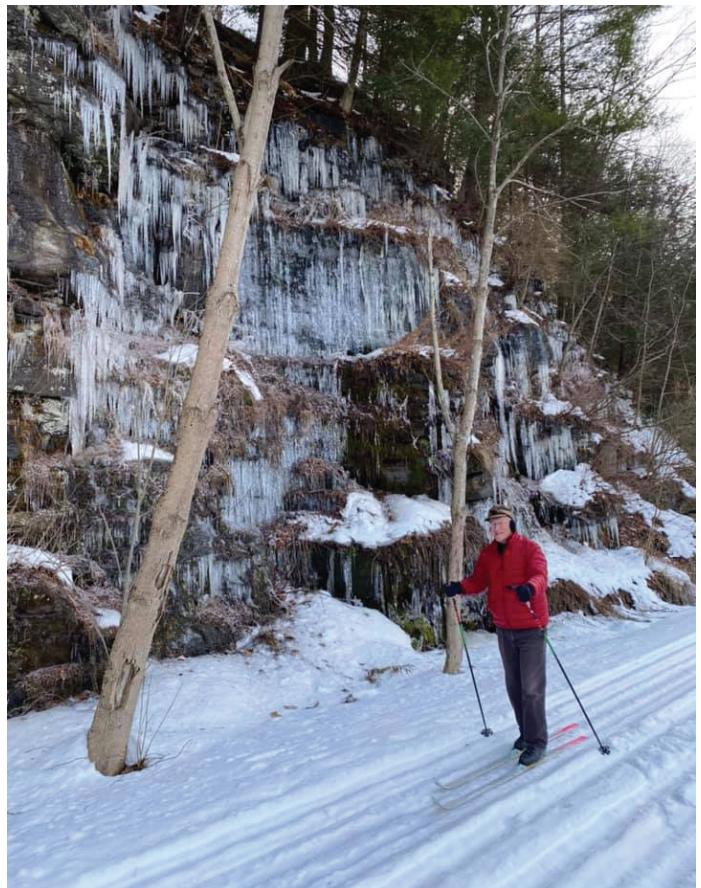
Since most of the monitoring visits happened in the spring, summer, and fall (it's difficult to find a boundary line marker under a foot of snow), Tamara will spend much of the winter season developing a workplan for the year ahead, reaching out to landowners, and reviewing the conservation values of prospective easement projects. However, that doesn't mean she'll spend these colder days stuck inside! In fact, there are still plenty of adventures to be had outside this time of year. Here, she shares some of her favorite ways to connect with nature during the winter.

What draws you outdoors for winter fun and recreation? (Are "winter" and "fun" hard to use in the same sentence?!) All joking aside, winter brings some unique outdoor experiences, along with a bonus of a disappearance of snakes and bugs! Hunting, camping, hiking, snowshoeing and skiing are some more active favorites for people to enjoy. But also birdwatching, stargazing and photography grow more nuanced in the winter months.

Some of you may be familiar with my husband, Van Wagner, through his music, love of history and teaching or all of the above! When our two sons were younger, Van convinced me to take a Hunter's Safety Course so I could get licensed and help teach our kids to hunt. Granted, years later I have yet to shoot my first deer, but I have learned about the other beauties of hunting – the stillness, watching the sunrise, listening to the crows and squirrels awakening in the early mornings, and observing details in nature (such as moss grows on the north side of the bark of trees.) Hunting is submerging yourself in all that is still, beautiful and nature! Just don't forget those handwarmers!



The 20+ inch snowstorm that blanketed the region in late December offered lots of wintry, outdoor fun – from cross country skiing to snow forts!



The Pine Creek Rail Trail was transformed into a skiers delight, thanks to DCNR for grooming the trail and clearing several of the access parking lots. NPC members helped conserve many of those access points along the trail, adding to the versatility and availability of the PCRT to all! Photo: George Durrwachter cross-country skiing the trail, photo by Shirley Durrwachter.

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Embracing Winter... *Continued from page 4*

As for other outdoor activities, I have dabbled in snowshoeing and skiing. However, I would say I am more content to help my kids dig out a snow fort and to care for our little farmette through the cold months – hand carrying water to our animals, collecting eggs before they freeze in the coop and watching our ducks take delight in snow as much as the rain!

While we cannot escape winter here in Pennsylvania, maybe this winter we can all find a way

to embrace it a little more. Find the enchantment in a fresh blanket of snow or put up a bird feeder to see what feathered friends you can attract over the winter. Perhaps try some new activity outside of your comfort zone! Love it or hate it – we can't escape it! But, I do look forward to the thaw of the spring and getting to see some of you out in the field on my visits next year!

Trees Planted on Plunketts Creek Add to Stability

Back in August a group of partners came together and assembled the funding to install streambank stabilization structures along Plunketts Creek, a tributary of Loyalsock Creek.

The August project provided some immediate help to reduce erosion and increase the natural stream function. In early December trees were planted at the top of the stream bank on one side of the stream to add another layer of stabilization.

The trees were a mix of sycamore, pin oak, and red maple. The trees were larger stock than you might be thinking. We wanted to get big roots in place as soon as possible, so that means we needed big trees. The roots are natural "rebar" and help hold the streambank together. You want those roots to work their way out to the side (but underground) and down deep. That takes some time. By planting bigger trees we're speeding up the process.

Additionally, the trees will provide shade to the stream helping to keep the water cooler in the summer for the trout (and other fish). The leaves on the tree will provide a food source for the macroinvertebrates (water insects) in the stream. The macroinvertebrates provide a food source for the trout.



A variety of red maple, sycamore and pin oak were planted along Plunketts Creek to further help stabilize the stream bank and provide shade, cooling the water for its inhabitants.

The planting had the opportunity to experience its first high water a couple weeks after they were in the ground. The site received 25" of snow one week and about 2" of rain during a warm-up the next week. Plunketts Creek was up and some debris collected on the trunks of the trees and the stakes helping to secure the trees. The debris was pulled off and all was well.

A big thank you to all the partners working at this site: the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association, Lycoming County Conservation District, PA Council of Trout Unlimited.

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of NPC's membership in 2020. In fact, NPC's year-end appeal received its largest response in over a decade! We also welcomed 70 new members throughout the year (many of whom were gifted their 1st time membership by an existing NPC member). You rewrote the narrative of 2020 through your spirit of giving. Thank you for your ongoing support of the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy.

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IRA and Appreciated Stock Donations

There are a number of meaningful ways to give to NPC. Typically donors use some form of cash, such as a check or credit card. However, in September we received the proceeds from an IRA and in October we received the donation of appreciated stock.

The donor of the IRA passed away earlier this year and named NPC as the beneficiary. Working with their financial advisor and an advisor representing NPC we were able to turn the IRA into cash and move the proceeds to our reserve account.

The stock donor had held the stock for a number of years and was facing a pretty hefty capital gains bill if they sold the stock. By donating it to NPC they could take the value of the stock at close on the day the stock was transferred as a charitable contribution.

We appreciate the creativity of these donors and their thinking beyond the normal cash donations. If you and your financial advisor think either a donation of appreciated stock or naming NPC as the beneficiary of an IRA fits in your financial plan, we're more than happy to discuss this with you and provide whatever information you may need for the paperwork.



Poking through the snow on skinny stems are the spent seed heads of Wild Bergamot. This native species' name comes from a Latin word for tube or pipe. Looking at the dried seed head, you can see why! All of the little tubes that held the individual flowers are visible. If you locate the remains of this plant on your rambles or skiing, take a moment to gently stroke the seed heads with your hand underneath them. You may be rewarded with a look at some remaining seeds. To learn more, follow the Underfoot series by Susan Sprout on the NPC blog at www.npcweb.org.