



# Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

Conserving and enhancing the lands and waters of Northcentral PA



Dr. George and Shirley Durrwachter were joined by all 3 Clinton County Commissioners, several NPC Board members, PA DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn, DCNR Deputy Director John Norbeck, and District Forester Tom Casilio in cutting the ribbon! (photo credit: Wesley Robinson, PA DCNR)

## Canoe Launch to Pine Creek Near Avis Celebrated as Phelps' Mills Canoe Access

What we called the "Avis Canoe Launch" has been officially named "Phelps' Mills Canoe Access." The site at 1019 E. Central Ave., Jersey Shore, was celebrated on Friday June 25, 2021 with an event that featured remarks by the project partners including Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn.

NPC started working on this project in December of 2018. Pine Creek Township (Clinton County) supervisors suggested the owner reach out to Tom Casilio the District Forester for the Tiadaghton State Forest. The owner was looking to sell the property and the Township was hoping to keep the public access to Pine Creek open.

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## Stream Projects Rolling Along

As you may remember from the spring newsletter, there were stream projects underway in January and March this year! The stream partnership has continued to roll along with projects completed on Fishing Creek (Clinton County), Beaver Run (Montour County) West Branch of Chilisquaque Creek (Montour), Limestone Run (Northumberland County), Middle Creek (Snyder County), North Fork Cowanesque (Tioga County), Limestone Run (Union County) and Sweitzer Run (Union County) with more to come in Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, and Union Counties.

The Daily Item, the newspaper based in Sunbury, sent out a photographer/videographer on June 24, 2021. If you go to

*continued on page 4*

## NPC Members Elect New Board Members

NPC did not have an annual membership meeting in 2020 due to the pandemic. The Board felt it made more sense at the time to continue with a Board that was elected by the membership than try to navigate how to hold a membership meeting during a pandemic.

Phyllis Reynolds and Roy Siefert were scheduled to complete their second 3-year term in 2020. They both agreed to serve an additional year. (Thank you again Phyllis and Roy!)

Carl Barlett and Gail Zimmerman completed their second 3-year term in 2021.

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## Canoe Launch to Pine Creek *continued*



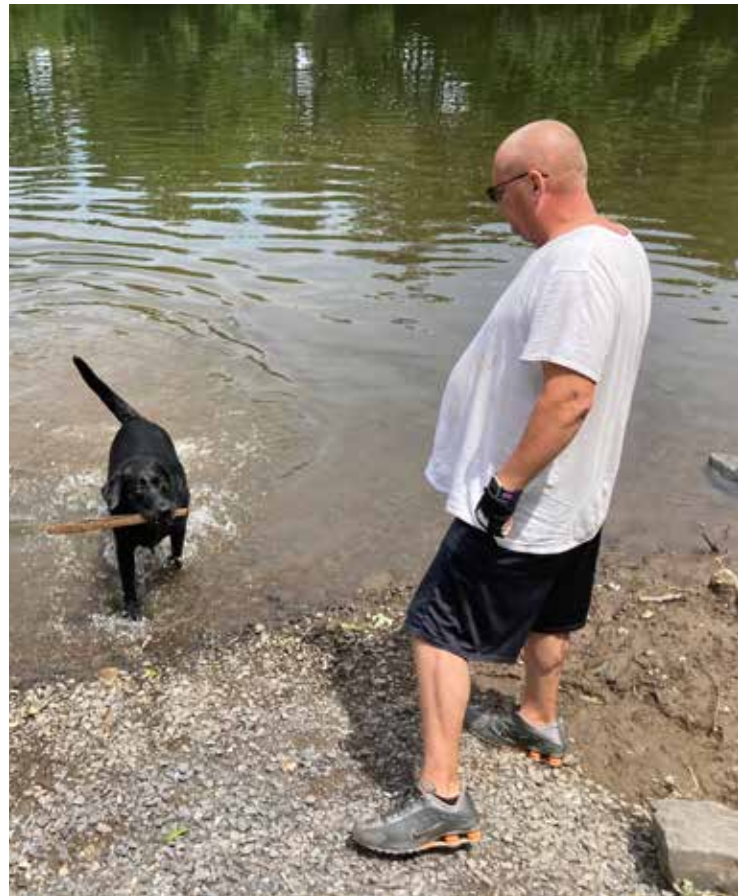
*Thank you to everyone who joined in celebrating the new and improved public access to Pine Creek! (photo credit: Wesley Robinson, PA DCNR)*

After doing some environmental testing due to a 1940s deed reference to a gas station, NPC took title to the property in June 2019. Thank you again to Dr. George and Shirley Durrwachter for the donation that funded the purchase of the property!

In December of 2019 the property became part of the Tiadaghton State Forest. The following summer, even with a pandemic underway, the Tiadaghton State Forest maintenance crew made improvements to the site. The August 2020 was funded with grants NPC secured from the Western Pennsylvania Canoe Access Fund and the Clinton County Tourism and Recreation Fund.

All of the speakers at the celebration commented on how important partnerships are to completing projects like this. Thank you to NPC's members for providing the resources that allow NPC staff to have conversations about "possible projects" (everything starts out as a possible project before it can develop into a "real" project). These conversations help forge partnerships and take crazy ideas, like buying what was once a gas station, and turn them into public access points that people and dogs can use.

Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate the new access and its official name! And special thank you to Carl Barlett (NPC Board member), Dr. George Durrwachter (donor and conservationist), Commissioner Jeff Snyder (Clinton County Commissioners and Clinton County Visitors Bureau), and Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn (PA DCNR) for their comments and reflections on what the project means.



*While we were celebrating the site, it was getting used! The gentleman explained he and his dog come to the site every day to play fetch-the-stick-from-the-Creek. His timing was perfect! And the dog didn't shake out the water on anyone. (photo credit: Wesley Robinson, PA DCNR)*



## NPC Members Elect *continued*

Plans were made in the spring of 2021 for an annual membership meeting that would be a hybrid. Members could attend by Zoom or in person. The in person portion was held outside. The meeting didn't involve a meal or lengthy presentation.

At the meeting held on June 27, 2021 Mary Blondy, Julie Weaver, Stephanie Radulski, and Chris Kenyon were elected to a first term of three years, and Bill Worobec was elected to a second, consecutive, 3-year term.

### ***Thank You and Welcome!***

Phyllis and Roy, thank you very much for agreeing to serve an extra year. Both of you are assets to the organization. Phyllis your experience with fundraising and event planning and your willingness to help at events is greatly appreciated. You always make sure everyone feels welcome.

Roy, your experience as a forester and managing recreational facilities were helpful time and time again. The Phelps Mill Canoe Access is a case in point. When "gas station" was mentioned you remained calmed and encouraged us to take the next step and see what happened.

Carl, thank you for sharing your experience as past legal counsel to NPC. The institutional memory was helpful numerous times. You were always willing to help out. You are a fabulous representative for NPC and the conservation partnerships we are part of.

Gail, thank you for your willingness to help out with the events and the membership program. Your involvement with other watershed groups and water related issues helped the group understand issues and learn.

Mary Baumunk Blondy is the Founder and President of Loyalsock Foundation, a non-profit improving the overall health and well-being of the residents of Sullivan County. Currently she is leading an effort to build a wellness and

cultural community center with facilities for health, fitness, education, and outdoor recreation in Laporte, PA. Mary previously worked in finance and banking. A native of Sullivan County, she also resides part of the year in Raleigh, NC.

Julie Weaver is a geologist by training. She transitioned from the field to the classroom and retired as a science teacher from the Southern Tioga School District. During her career she taught a variety of grades and areas of science. She still serves as a curriculum consultant.

Stephanie Barlett Radulski may be a familiar name and face as she worked for NPC in the mid-1990s. She's now a digital communications consultant working primarily for the American Psychological Association, but is also active in several other local organizations, including the WASD Education Foundation, JVB Library, WAHS Orchestra Association and several other community groups.

Chris Kenyon is an attorney with McCormick Law Firm. A Navy veteran, Chris has a varied practice that includes municipal and school district law.

Bill Worobec is a financial advisor who is working towards retirement. He is a board member for the Susquehanna Chapter of Trout Unlimited. He also previously served as a Commissioner for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

## State Forester and DCNR Deputy Secretary Visit Stream Project

On May 26, 2021 Deputy Secretary for Conservation and Technical Services at DCNR Lauren Imgrund and State Forester Ellen Shultzabarger visited the 2020 stream project site at Geisinger and got the grand tour from Geisinger's Vice-President of Facilities Operations Al Neuner. Also joining in the tour were Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Habitat Management Division Chief Tyler Neimond and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Northcentral Regional Director Marcus Kohl.

The stream project that happened in May and June 2020 along Sechler Run included work to stabilize the eroding stream-banks, reconnect the stream to its floodplain, increase the long-term stability of the stream banks, and increase the shade along the stream. All of this was done in the "front yard" of

Geisinger's Woodbine Lane center along Route 11 in Danville.

Geisinger's facilities and operations staff went above and beyond during the project and after. They added a walking trail, signage along the trail, and a pollinator planting to further enhance the work along the stream. Their staff, visitors, and patients are making good use of the trail. NPC staff frequently receive photos from people using the trail to update us on how the pollinator planting is doing (and keep the photos coming!). The project involved the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. As an organization that works with partners all the time, the fact that three state agencies came together to implement a project during a pandemic didn't

*continued on page 6*





## Stream Projects *continued*

their website ([dailyitem.com](http://dailyitem.com)) and look in the video section you'll find a video that includes drone footage of structures as they are being built.

Since the end of May Susquehanna University's Freshwater Research Institute has provided interns to help at the streambank stabilization projects. On days there isn't a stream project to help at, or when one of the other interns breaks their foot (not during the internship), Adam and Colin are helping with electrofishing, kicknetting, and sediment sampling.

We asked them to introduce themselves to you:

### **Adam Yeager**

Hello, my name is Adam Yeager, I am a Junior Ecology major at Susquehanna University. I am originally from Wharton, New Jersey and came to Pennsylvania to further my education in ecology and environmental science. At school, I major in Ecology, while minoring in Environmental Science and Military Science through the Army ROTC program. The idea of aquatic biology, and the conservation and restoration of trout streams has been an interest of mine since I was in high school. Upon graduation, I will be serving as an officer in the U.S. Army, and I hope to apply these skills post-service.



When first hearing about the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy internship, I was curious to see how restoration projects are planned and how they are completed. Through working with the Conservancy and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission I have learned the hard work these organizations put in to restoring the natural habitat and improving the streams and land for future generations. One thing that surprised me was how affective the log structures were in redirecting the flow of the water and sediment deposits.

### **Colin Hill**

I am Colin Hill, an intern with the Freshwater Research Institute of Susquehanna University and Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy. I am a junior ecology major and earth and environmental sciences minor. My hometown is Berwick, PA. I chose to pursue an ecology major through my love for the outdoors and more specifically my love for waterways and the dynamics surrounding those ecosystems.

Through my path to the rank of Eagle Scout in Boy Scouts I developed my affinity for exploring the outdoors as well as a drive to improve natural waterway health and quality. I aspire to build my career in stream research and restoration in hopes of making a significant difference in tributary health. This is in hopes of causing a domino effect to result in increased river health.



My experience over the last few summers with these internships has had tremendously positive effects on my drive for conservation, love for waterways, and knowledge regarding stream dynamics. Working with the Conservancy and Fish and Boat Commission has taught me much about how log installations are done correctly, the reasons behind specific installations, and the intended long-term effects of doing stream improvement projects such as this one. Seeing the work done on this stream has strengthened my desire to work in stream improvement and work for better natural health.



*While they may be classified as fisheries biologists, the guys from the PA Fish and Boat Commission do spend time using chainsaws and being lumberjacks.*





## What is Ecological Restoration *By Sara Street*

A question recently posed to me was what is ecological restoration? The textbook definition is: "Ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. Ecosystems are dynamic communities of plants, animals, and microorganisms interacting with their physical environment as a functional unit."

These communities can be damaged, degraded, or destroyed by human activity. Degradation can also occur when animal populations exceed their carrying capacity or there aren't enough predators (i.e. white-tailed deer in Pennsylvania), or the predators are extinct. Degradation can happen when non-native plants take the place of native plants by aggressively competing for light, water, and space to grow (i.e. the ailanthus or tree of heaven). Fire, drought, insect blights, and violent storm systems, are all examples of naturally caused forms of degradation. All of the above mentioned forms can be devastating when there is not enough ecological diversity of species to recolonize the resulting open space.

This concept can also apply to reforestation. Often landowners ask me, "How can I tell if my forest is healthy?" My response is: Can your forest regenerate itself after disturbance? Do you see little tree seedlings germinating on the forest floor? Do you see tree saplings developing into young trees? Do you have a wide array of species in your forest? If you can answer yes to all these questions then, your forest can be considered healthy.

Of course, any foresters out there will add quite a few more questions to this list! But, the greatest importance is placed on regenerating tree seedlings. Ecological restoration asks us to look towards the other layers of the forest. Is there a shrub layer? Is there a groundcover layer or do we have baresoil? Are insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals present? Most importantly, what is the species diversity that is represented? The more species you have, the more resilient your forest lands will be to the various forms of degradation.



*Irion Easement shows Pennsylvania sedge groundcover. Is there a layer missing?*



*Are all the forest layers represented in this picture of the Morgan Valley Easement?*



*What do you see at the Bednar Easement? (Hint: All three properties display a rich variety of species. While not all layers were present throughout the easements, they were all present in most locations.)*





## State Forester and DCNR *continued*

surprise us, but we know it surprises a lot of people to see that level of cooperation.

Neuner explained how Geisinger is taking a holistic approach to its facilities and thinking about how water quality impacts human health and how reducing sediment in water improves community health. He noted the physical and mental wellness the walking path and pollinator strip provide for employees and visitors.

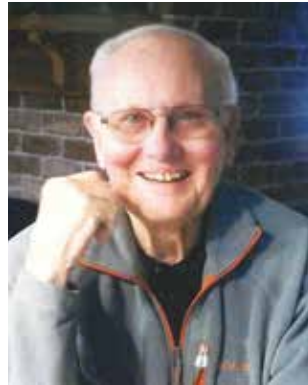
If you're at Geisinger's Woodbine Lane building and have time, take a walk on the path! NPC's members helped coordinate the water quality improvement project, so check out the work you helped make possible.



Lauren Imgrund and Jason Fellon walk along Sechler Run between the riparian buffer planting and pollinator strip. (photo credit: Megan Lehman)

## Dr. Robert Burns

Dr. Bob Burns, a long time NPC member passed away on April 30, 2021. Dr. Burns was a husband, father, grandfather, fisherman, hunter, hiker, and golfer. He was an Air Force veteran and he founded the Department of Critical Care Medicine at Geisinger Medical Center. This structure of care was unique at the time and became what is now recognized as the ideal standard of ICU care.



Dr. Burns enjoyed his time at his family home in Cammal, PA along Pine Creek. The donations his family, friends, and colleagues made in his honor will help conserve and enhance the region so generations to come can enjoy fishing, hunting, and hiking the same hills and valleys he did.

Thank you to Janet and Bryan and the family for suggesting contributions to NPC in Dr. Burns's memory and thank you to everyone who remembered Dr. Burns through a donation.

## DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF J. ROBERT BURNS

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## DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS • April 1 to June 30, 2021

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# DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS continued

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Oscar W. Knade Jr.

## ***In honor of Mel & Gail Zimmerman***

Chris Bastress & Lynn Estomin

## ***In memory of Bill Correll, Jr.***

The Carey Family

## ***In memory of Bill & Ethel Naylor***

Samuel & Darlene Godfrey

## ***In memory of Aravind Joshi***

Susan Joshi

***Thank you for supporting  
the work of the Northcentral  
Pennsylvania Conservancy!***



## Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

PO Box 2083  
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## Thank You!

A huge thank you to the students in the life skills classes at Jersey Shore Elementary!!!!

The students recently raised \$400 to donate to the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy. They sold coffee, tea, and other drinks plus homemade snacks they prepared to the staff of the elementary school to raise the funds.

Cindy Ferguson, MS CCC-SP, of Jersey Shore Area School District, stated, "The classes under the guidance of their teachers, Ms. Liddic and Mrs. Wolesslagle, and support staff are very conservation focused and sponsor Earth Day projects within the school and community. We are so very proud of their dedication and generosity."

We're proud too Mrs. Ferguson!



*Jersey Shore Life Skills (photo credit: Cindy Ferguson)*