

THE HORIZON

NEWSLETTER OF NORTH BRANCH LAND TRUST

Spring 2010 Vol. 16 No. 1



Why Does Your Community Need a Land Trust?

by Paul Lumia, Executive Director

In this issue of *The Horizon* you will find articles covering the topic of conservation agreements or easements, the preeminent tool of land conservation organizations to protect scenic, natural, and historic places throughout the United States today. I would like to give you a brief history of the land conservation movement and land trusts in the United States. Though land trusts have been around for over a century, it is just in the past 60 years that they have really come into their own, becoming a powerful and integral part of the communities in which they work.

Many people have asked me to explain exactly what a land trust does, and when I tell them they invariably ask the next two questions: Why are private land trust services needed, given that municipalities, states, and the federal government conserve scenic and natural lands on behalf of the public? And, if these services are needed, how does the land trust fund its operations? To answer these questions I like to go back in history and explain the chronology that led to the modern land trust movement and its success in conserving our scenic and natural treasures for future generations to enjoy.

Citizens of the United States have always been concerned with the conservation of special places. As early as the 1600s the Plymouth Colonies established in Massachusetts set aside the undeveloped northern tip of Cape Cod as the "Province Lands" for the benefit of the people. In 1832 the U.S. government protected the Arkansas Hot Springs; in 1864 the Yosemite Valley was conserved

by the state of California; and the 3,468 square miles of Yellowstone was conserved by an act of Congress signed into law by Ulysses S. Grant in 1872, creating America's—and the world's first—national park system. Over the years many local, state, and federal

mandates have helped conserve and protect many worthy natural and historical sites for the public benefit.

By the end of the nineteenth century the conservation movement had succeeded in protecting many natural wonders of the American West while the more populated and industrial East remained relatively unprotected. To counter this lack of public land protection in the face of rapid urban growth, a young Boston landscape architect by the name of Charles Eliot formed the Trustees of Reservations in 1891 "for the purposes of acquiring, holding, maintaining and opening to the public...beautiful and historic places...within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." The Trustees of Reservations became the first private non-profit conservation organization or land trust of its kind in the country. Since that time many thousands of acres of scenic and natural lands have been protected and many historic places preserved by private, non-profit land trusts.



Today there are over 1,700 land trusts that have protected over 37 million acres in the United States. How did one land trust formed in 1891 grow to over 1,700 land trusts today operating throughout the country? As the population of the United States expanded throughout the Industrial Revolution and up to the mid 1950s, more and more natural and scenic lands were consumed in the name of economic progress. The feeling was that the consumption of these lands was considered acceptable, given that the United States was blessed with so much land and that there was plenty more available. The supply of open space seemed limitless. This paradigm held true for a time but only because our population numbers were low for the amount open space available and because this population was mainly concentrated in the urban areas.

Starting in the mid 1950s things changed and the paradigm began to fail. Economic prosperity was on the

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by Lynn Aldrich, NBLT Chair

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The Horizon is a semiannual publication of NBLT for its members and friends. To update your contact information call (570) 696-5545 or send an email to thoma@nblt.org



Thanks to all members who responded to NBLT's poll regarding natural gas drilling in NE PA. The No Development (non-surface disturbance) lease referred to in the poll means

that no gas drilling equipment or drilling activity would be allowed on our Howland property but that natural gas could be taken from under the property from a well pad located on a nearby property via underground horizontal drilling.

Some of you (32%) want NBLT to sign a No Development lease on the Howland property now to enable NBLT to influence, as much as is possible, how drilling is done, provide a model for a non-surface disturbance lease, and use the money to support and further the mission of NBLT. Some of you (21%) do not want NBLT to ever sign a No Development lease due to the potential for environmental damage to Howland and/or surrounding properties and surface and ground water. The largest number of you responding (42%) wants NBLT to wait before signing any non-surface disturbance lease due to concerns about the amount of water used, potential harm to ground water, and whether regulations are adequate to protect the public health and the environment. No matter what NBLT's board decides, some of you will no longer support NBLT. The poll results can be found on page 15 of this newsletter.

Your comments helped us to understand your answers. And some comments merit a response and clarification. The issue of whether NBLT is doing this just for the money was a concern in some poll responses. This issue ties to the theme of this newsletter, "Conservation Easements."

As supporters, at the beginning of the year you received a copy of NBLT's

Annual Report. If you've been following these reports over the years, you'll see that NBLT's financial assets are growing. However, the majority of these assets are not available for ongoing operating expenses which are reflected in NBLT's yearly operating budget.

Elsewhere you've read that when a landowner voluntarily relinquishes certain development rights using a Conservation Easement, the landowner also endows NBLT with money to ensure the monitoring and protection of these rights in perpetuity, though the endowment amount is not enough to cover the full cost of those activities. NBLT has also been given land and buildings by landowners, much of which is not transferable to liquid assets due to the landowner's wishes. NBLT has had a deficit in its operating budget for the past couple of years. The deficit is covered by drawing down on money in reserve from previous years in which large donations provided an excess in revenue over expenses.

The board is looking long range at the need for increased unrestricted income once the reserve money is exhausted in the next four to five years so that NBLT can continue operating at its current level of land protection. For this reason, the board is looking at conducting a sustainability study and investigating additional fundraising activities including whether or not to have a No Development natural gas lease at Howland. The board will need to fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities to the land trust and maintain its responsibility to NBLT's mission. Your participation in the poll has helped us revisit our mission and how important you feel NBLT's work is to this region.

Your input is important to us. We will keep you informed as to our progress toward financial sustainability in support of our important work to conserve land in our region for the enjoyment of future generations. ☺

Executive Director's Message

by Paul Lumia



These are interesting times in northeastern Pennsylvania! Over the last few years a vast number of gas exploration and drilling companies have set up

operations in the NBLT service area to take advantage of the ancient Marcellus Shale natural gas formation found at depths in the region of anywhere from 6,000 to 9,000 feet below the earth's surface. This shale and the natural gas contained in it formed from plant and animal life present during the Middle Devonian period 397 to 385 million years ago. Today it is estimated that there are 50 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas in the shale worth over a trillion dollars, and the technology to economically extract it now exists in the form of horizontal drilling.

I am sure the above information elicits different reactions depending on where you stand on the issue. Based on my discussions with many of you I know that some are adamantly opposed to any form of resource extraction in our region; some are comfortable with the process; while many are somewhere in the middle, worried about the environmental impacts but cognizant of the economic gains. As we sort out the pros and cons we should be aware of two hard facts. First, the gas extraction industry is here because the economics of drilling work and because there is a huge market for the resource. Second, state and federal regulations governing the industry may not be as stringent as many of us would like them to be.

To move forward confidently and with a purpose we should become informed,

learning as much as possible about the industry and its operations in our region. We should become familiar with the current laws and regulations governing the industry as well as any pending legislation. Most importantly, we should contact our elected officials making them aware of our concerns and pressing them for legal reforms that provide us and our environment with the highest levels of protection. Remember, they hold the key to passing meaningful legislation. We all need to stay engaged and vigilant to achieve a positive outcome.

I hope you enjoy our spring newsletter. On the pages that follow you will find articles that outline and explain the conservation tools we use to protect natural lands throughout northeastern Pennsylvania. After you have read through it please do not hesitate to call on us with any questions you may have regarding conservation easements, environmental concerns over natural gas extraction, or any general questions on land conservation. We work for you and have protected over 10,700 acres in our communities since 1993! ☺



Why Does Your...

(Continued from page 1)

rise and many more Americans had the ability to travel outside their urban environs. The Interstate Highway System came into its own, providing the newly minted middle class a conduit with which to escape the urban core, while the completion of public transit projects helped move many millions of people to and from the urban fringe. As a result the greenfields, the natural and agricultural lands on the urban edge, were consumed at an ever increasing pace. Concurrently federal, state, and municipal entities were getting out of the land protection business due to the great economic costs associated with it. They could no longer afford to buy and protect scenic and natural areas for the public benefit. Monies were needed to support the ever expanding urban infrastructure. Natural open space, especially in the East, was becoming an expensive commodity whose highest and best use was usually bricks and mortar development. The rise of the land trust movement correlates nicely with the rapid expansion of our urban centers; the numbers begin to rise in the late '50s and skyrocket from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s with over one new land trust forming every week.

There have always been important scenic landscapes and natural lands that people have wanted to protect or conserve in perpetuity for future generations to enjoy. As we have grown as a nation both in population and economic prosperity more and more of these unique places have come under the increasing threat of development. Moreover, as this reality befalls us the public sector can no longer afford to foot the bill to conserve all of the scenic and natural places we may want to protect. Land trusts formed to fill this conservation void. What is significant about this is that these land trusts are usually community based and know better than any outside entity which lands are worth protecting in their area of operation.

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Why Does Your...

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North Branch Land Trust (NBLT), like all land trusts in the United States, has a mission and region in which it works. Ours happens to be to protect the natural lands that surround the north branch of the Susquehanna River from Luzerne and Columbia counties in the south to Bradford and Susquehanna counties in the north. Some land trusts work in smaller geographic areas such as one county or even in just one municipality. Others work to preserve historic buildings or historic sites. Regardless of their size and mission most land trusts seek donations from their community to support their conservation efforts. Like any business entity land trusts have expenses that must be met and annual budgets that must be adhered to if they are going to be sustainable over time. So when you donate to a land trust you are helping support that land trust's mission. You are supporting the conservation, in perpetuity, of the scenic and natural lands in your community—the rolling hills that border our roads, the forests and fields that provide our flood protection, our drinking water, and our food. The key for the land trust is to generate enough financial support through donations, gifts, and programming to become self-sustaining while carrying out its mission.

It used to be that land trusts formed reactively, because of the impending development of a certain piece of natural ground or scenic landscape that the community desperately wanted to protect. People would rally together, raise money, and buy out the developer or landowner to protect the land. The land trust would take ownership of this land pledging to keep it natural forever. Forever is a long time and people don't last as long as the land they pledged to protect. A legal vehicle was needed to ensure that forever meant forever, so that people could be assured that the lands they wanted protected would remain so in perpetuity. Enter the conservation agreement or easement, a legal docu-

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Conservation Easement Summary

by Rick Koval, Director of Land Conservation



I hope this article will help inform potential conservation-minded landowners, as well as NBLT members and the general public, about this often-complicated procedure.

Basically, a conservation easement is a legal document that defines the conservation values of a property and outlines allowable land use activities and restrictions. The document is typically twenty-five pages long and is comprised of four sections: an introduction; conservation value statements entitled "Whereas"; six "Articles" regarding rights of the landowner and land trust; and the signature pages.

The conservation easement document must meet the requirements defined in the Pennsylvania Conservation and Preservation Easements Act, Act 29 of 2001 (the "State Conservation Easement Law"). The conservation easement also needs to comply with the IRS "Criteria for Conservation Easements" and must meet at least **one** of the following conservation purposes:

The preservation of land areas for outdoor recreation by, or the education of, the general public.

The protection of a relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife, or plants, or similar ecosystem.

The preservation of certain open space, including farmland and forestland, where such preservation is for the scenic enjoyment of the general public.

The preservation of a historically important land area or a certified historic structure.

The introduction occurs on the first page and includes the property's parcel number(s). A section entitled "WITNESSETH THAT" describes the location of the property, including township

The final and most important step in protecting a property in perpetuity is drafting a binding and unambiguous legal document—the conservation easement.

and county; total acreage of the property and any conserved portion thereof; deed information including recording date, deed book and page numbers; and the "Owner's" and the "Holder's" names and addresses.

The next part is a series of proclamations, headed "WHEREAS." This mentions Exhibit "A"—the legal metes and bounds—and Exhibit "B"—the conservation plan for the property. The remaining "WHEREAS" clauses are the very important statements describing the conservation values of the property. These define why North Branch Land Trust has accepted a conservation agreement on this particular property and the conservation purposes served. The conservation values and purposes include preservation of natural communities, wildlife communities and scenic open space. Protection of rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, vernal pools and wetlands occurring in the conservation area and their impact towards downstream watersheds are addressed. The conservation of soils and prevention of soil erosion is outlined. Baseline observations indicating the numbers of flora and fauna species observed in the conservation area are mentioned along with the habitats that these species depend upon. Any plant and animal "Species of Concern" are addressed. The proximity to nearby protected lands or ecologically significant areas is mentioned. Sustainable land use activities like agriculture or forestry are noted.

Following the "Whereas" clauses are the six aforementioned "Articles" beginning with "ARTICLE 1, GRANT OF EASEMENT." This section states that the "OWNER" voluntarily and unconditionally grants and conveys unto the "HOLDER," North Branch Land Trust, a **perpetual** easement over the Conservation Area for the purpose of preserving, conserving, and protecting the Conservation Purposes. The Owner also grants the Holder the right to inspect the property, providing that the Holder gives at least 7 days' notice to the Owner, except in cases of suspected or known violations of the conservation easement. Please note that the conservancy (North Branch Land Trust) only

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Emotions—Your Connection to the Land

by Linda Thoma, Director of Operations



Landowners interested in conserving their properties do so for various reasons. Some are logical—the land is adjacent to a state park, state forest, game lands, or other existing open space, so why not add to it? Some are financial—the tax benefits are helpful to the landowner's financial position. Finally, some are emotional, even visceral—"my family has been here for generations and I love this land. It would tear me apart to see this developed." In past issues of *The Horizon* many of you have read about the financial benefits that may exist for landowners who choose to conserve their property. In this issue, however, I want to touch on the emotional side of the process.

Over the past 15 years NBLT has met with many families who come from the same mold—they love their land, they love their land, and they love their land. I set out to discover what some of them have to say about the process of protecting something they love so dearly.

Most recently, Gene and Betsy Pelletier signed a conservation easement on their 13-acre property in Bradford County. Here is what they have to say about the process and working with us:

"Once we sent our e-mail expressing our interest in conserving our property, the NBLT response was almost immediate. Rick Koval was there for us every step of the way, always supportive and very responsive to our needs. We found the process to be straightforward, seamless and enlightening, especially the flora and fauna inventory. It was a pleasure to work with all the knowledgeable, professional and dedicated members of the NBLT staff who generously shared their knowledge and experience with us to achieve a positive outcome."

John and Kathryn Kuryloski of Columbia County completed their 54-acre conservation easement with us late in 2008. They say:

"We thought we knew our property, but in the process of conserving our land with NBLT, we gained increased insight and appreciation of the ecosystem we call home and for this we give special thanks to Rick Koval for his expertise and enthusiasm. We have also gained great satisfaction and pleasure in becoming part of the NBLT community of like-minded conservationists."

Families who came to us early in our existence were elated to discover us and our work. Conserving land in the 1990s and early into the next decade was very new to our region and viewed by some to be a bit extreme, very unconventional. For a few brave souls, this was exactly what they had in mind. Take for instance Betty Davies of Mehoopany in Wyoming County who, shortly after her 80th birthday in 1998, signed her conservation easement assuring that her 37 acres would remain unspoiled even after she was gone. She still lives alongside Mehoopany Creek, in a log home she and her late husband, Carlton, built decades ago with trees cut from their own land. Pines tower over the house, and rock ledges across the creek overhang a summertime swimming hole. Betty could not bear the thought that a future owner might destroy the place that meant so much to her family:

"I have always loved the out-of-doors and the land, and I didn't want anybody who bought my property after I was gone to come in and cut down these beautiful trees...just to make money. Money is not the important thing. I was interested in the land and in the beauty of the land, and the peace that there is here."

In 1996, Ed and Amber Zygmunt of Susquehanna County purchased 50 acres of rolling land in Auburn Township that had been farmed for over 100 years. They refurbished the old farm-

house into a cozy home and began making the surrounding property just as welcoming to wildlife. Lawns were replaced with perennial flowerbeds that attracted butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. New stone walls, ponds and shrubs provided shelter and food for many wild creatures. Tree plantings and an enlarged wetland diverted muddy storm water runoff away from a stream that flows into the Susquehanna River, keeping the stream clean and recharging the ground water supply. Amber and Ed are not farmers themselves—both have office jobs—but they wanted their land to continue to be put to productive use, so they arranged to have a neighboring farmer use it to grow feed for his dairy cattle.

The Zygmunts worked in partnership with other environmental organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry. But the thought of all of their work being destroyed by a future owner troubled the couple.

They came to NBLT in 1999 to conserve their land. Here is what they have to say:

"We wanted to preserve it, not only for our generation, but also our grandchildren's generation. The questions the Land Trust had in their paperwork made you really consider a whole lot of things. They made it really easy...when it came right down to it; it really was a very simple process.... Working with the staff and volunteers of the North Branch Land Trust to draft our conservation easement was like putting together a puzzle. When the last piece was finally in place, we knew we created something beautiful that could never be taken apart."

Conservation easement donor Gerard Kipp came to us by way of his father, Joe, who originally contacted us in the late '90s. Joe left the land to Gerard, who signed his easement document in

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Why Does Your...

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ment that is executed between the owner of a piece of land and the land trust, and made part of the public record forever. The conservation easement, as you will read in this newsletter, is a powerful legal tool available to the land trust and to landowners interested in protecting their land in perpetuity while possibly allowing the landowner to receive valuable income and estate tax benefits. The conservation easement allows the land trust to conserve land without taking ownership of it (though land trusts will still buy land outright and accept gifts of land).

History shows us that the protection of scenic landscapes, historic sites, and other natural lands is increasingly becoming the responsibility of private citizens and local initiatives. The land trust is a community asset available to help facilitate these initiatives. The land trust works to conserve various types of land. These lands can be privately owned and conserved with no public access permitted or limited public access permitted. They can be lands gifted to the land trust by an individual or estate with the provision that they be protected. They can be private lands that the land trust and the community deem worthy of conservation and the community fundraises to buy the land or the development rights from the landowner. However it is done, the land trust is the best entity available to ensure that the land remains protected in perpetuity.

All of us need to be thinking now about what we want our community to look like in both the near and the distant future. We need to be developing community and regional master plans now to ensure that the scenic and natural lands we may take for granted today are protected for tomorrow. North Branch Land Trust, like other land trusts throughout the country, works to protect scenic and natural community assets while promoting thoughtful development. ☼

Land Trusts and Conservancies Big and Small Working Together

by Ellen Lott, Project Manager,
TNC Northeastern Pennsylvania Office

At this year's Annual Dinner, North Branch Land Trust is honoring a colleague from The Nature Conservancy, Ralph (Bud) Cook, for his outstanding contribution to land conservation. Although it might seem odd to recognize a "competitor," the reality is that land trusts and conservancies often work collaboratively.

While the business world revolves around competition, the land conservation community strives to find the "best" way to protect land. Typically, the best results come from partnerships where multiple organizations contribute based on their strengths. Conservation staffs consider geographic location, the mission of each organization, staff capacity and financial resources. Often, land trusts refer landowners to other conservation organizations if they feel that is the best "match."

Several land conservation organizations exist in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Some call themselves "land trusts"; others "conservancies." The terms can be used interchangeably. Generally, these are non-profit entities that use the same basic conservation tools: land protection through acquisition or conservation easements.

The essential difference between conservation organizations lies in their mission and scope, or geography over which they work. The North Branch Land Trust works "in partnership with landowners and their communities to preserve the beauty and open landscapes that sustain us."

North Branch Land Trust focuses on the watersheds and other lands that frame the North Branch of the Susquehanna River. It concentrates its efforts in, but is not limited to, the following counties: Bradford, Sullivan, Wyoming, Columbia, Susquehanna, Lackawanna and Luzerne. It's a local land trust based in Trucksville, just west of Wilkes-Barre.

The Nature Conservancy is an international conservation organization with headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, and a local office in Long Pond, Pennsylvania. Its mission is to preserve the

plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

The Nature Conservancy was started 59 years ago by a group of scientists; it retains a scientific approach in prioritizing which lands and waters are the highest priorities for protection. It has protected more than 119 million acres of land and 5,000 miles of rivers worldwide.

The Nature Conservancy, with more than one million members, works in all 50 states and more than 30 countries. In Pennsylvania, it focuses on protecting the Commonwealth's vast forests, fresh water, and rare communities.

In Northeastern Pennsylvania, local Nature Conservancy staff, led by Bud Cook, has protected more than 14,000 acres of land. One of Cook's first projects in the area was the protection of the 92 acres at Seven Tubs Natural Area, land that was donated by PPL in 1979. Other nearby Nature Conservancy preserves include the 648-acre old-growth Woodbourne Forest in Susquehanna County; Tannersville Cranberry Bog in Monroe County; the Florence Shelley Preserve in Wayne County; and the Dick and Nancy Eales Preserve at Moosic Mountain near Scranton.

North Branch Land Trust, established in 1993, has protected 48 properties, including the 667-acre Howland Preserve in Wyoming County, 1,880 acres at Bear Creek Camp in Luzerne County and the 3,015-acre New Pocono Trust in Bear Creek Township. It relies on its 494 members and has a local Board of Directors.

North Branch Land Trust and Nature Conservancy collaboration extends beyond deciding which land trust takes responsibility for certain land protection projects; they are also working together to secure additional open space funding in Luzerne County. The measure of a land trust's "success" lies not in competition, but in cooperatively striving to protect as much of the natural world as possible. ☼

Conservation Easements: A Tool for Preservation

by Karen J. Dickerson,
Director of Communications & Marketing, Lancaster Farmland Trust



Lancaster Farmland Trust is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1988. The Trust's mission is to preserve and steward the beautiful, productive farmland of Lancaster County that reflects our heritage, supports our economy, nurtures our health, and enhances our quality of life.

When the Trust preserves a farm, the farmer continues to privately own the property and can farm the land as he chooses. The only difference is that specific rights to develop the land for non-agricultural purposes are relinquished. The Trust uses a legal document called a conservation easement to preserve farmland. A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally binding agreement between the land owner and the Trust that ensures the farm will be reserved for agricultural use in perpetuity. The document is permanent and follows the property, not the owner. It is recorded with the Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds.

Farmers who decide to preserve their land can choose to donate their conservation easement or ask for a payment per acre. This payment is commonly known as a "bargain sale payment."

The Trust determines the amount of the payment using a set of standards called Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) Criteria. This set of standards serves as a guide for the Trust's Land Preservation Committee and Board of Trustees to assist in deciding the dollar amount to be offered to a farm owner for a conservation easement.

The LESA criteria consider four standards: soil quality, development pressure, farm viability, and farmland concentration potential. The standards also include a bonus category which allows staff or board members to add points due to unique factors that add intangible benefits to the preservation of the property. Total points earned on the LESA evaluation equate to a recommended dollar amount per acre to be paid to the farmer for the development rights on the property. This value is considerably lower than what the appraisal will determine to be the conservation easement value. The differ-

ence between the bargain sale payment and the conservation easement value is eligible to be used as a federal income tax deduction.

Lancaster Farmland Trust is able to "custom tailor" an agreement that meets a variety of property transfer and tax situations typically faced by farmers. Easements can work especially well when a farmer wants to:

- Save on federal income tax
- Use the cash from an easement to help purchase a second farm
- Plan for passing the farm to the next generation
- Make the farm affordable to heirs
- Preserve the land regardless of financial benefit

Be sure that executors will preserve a farm and limit the estate's tax exposure

A conservation easement is not intended to be changed. It is the policy of Lancaster Farmland Trust to hold and enforce our conservation easements as written. Amendments to conservation easements are authorized only in exceptional circumstances. All requests for amendments are reviewed in accordance to procedures outlined in the organiza-



tion's Easement Amendment Policy. The requestor of an easement amendment pays all costs of reviewing an amendment request and of implementing the amendment if approved, unless specifically waived by the Board of Trustees.

Since 1988 the Trust has preserved 337 farms and over 21,000 acres of farmland in Lancaster County. You can learn more about the Trust at www.lancasterfarmlandtrust.org. ☺

Preserving Family Lands: The Benefits of Land Conservation (A Tax and Estate Planning Seminar)

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Funded in part by a grant from PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Growing Greener Environmental Stewardship Fund under the Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape.



Tuesday June 29th 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, June 30th, 8:30 a.m.
Mohegan Sun • Route 315, Wilkes-Barre

Discussion with Landowners

Tuesday, June 29 • 5:30-7:30 p.m

This is an excellent opportunity for landowners to learn about the value of land conservation in estate and tax planning, and learn what local resources are available. Sign in, collect information from the exhibits, and visit with land trusts and sponsoring organizations. Presentation by Stephen Small begins at 6:00 p.m. with Q&A following. He will guide landowners through the tax benefits of preserving family lands. The first 50 attendees will receive a copy of "Preserving Family Lands", Book I by Stephen Small. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and the lecture starts promptly at 6:00 p.m. Cost is \$10.00 for NBLT members; \$15.00 for Non-members. Refreshments will be served.

Workshop for Professionals

Wednesday, June 30 • 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

This workshop is designed for professionals who deal with complex tax and estate planning issues. Learn how to help clients minimize income and estate taxes, keep cherished lands in the family, and protect the natural landscape for future generations to enjoy. If you are an attorney, CPA, estate planner, tax advisor, real estate professional, or financial planner or just want to know more, this session is for you. 3.0 CLE and CPE credits are available. Cost is \$100.00 for professionals seeking credits; \$50.00 for professionals not seeking credits. Hot and cold beverages and a light breakfast are included. Doors open at 7:30 a.m.

Guest Lecturer: Stephen J. Small, Esq.

Stephen J. Small is recognized as the nation's leading authority on private land protection options and strategies. Steve wrote the federal income tax regulations on conservation easements as attorney-advisor in the Office of Chief Counsel of the Internal Revenue Service. Steve currently represents and advises numerous corporate, individual, and family owners on complex land planning for their properties. He also directs project teams on extensive and complex planning for maximum income tax benefits in connection with conservation easements. Steve advises government agencies and non-profits on leveraging land acquisition dollars. In addition to representing clients and writing books, Stephen Small also tours the United States delivering speeches and leading workshops on the importance of income tax and estate tax planning and land preservation.

Please contact North Branch Land Trust at (570) 696-5545 or www.nblt.org for sponsorship information and reservations. Sponsorship opportunities are still available at \$300.00, \$500.00, \$1,000.00, \$2,000.00, and \$4,000.00. ☎

Name: _____
 Organization: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____
 Landowner Event Member \$ _____ Non-Member \$ _____
 Professional Event \$50.00: _____ With Credits \$100: _____

The Federal Conservation Tax Incentive: How You Can Help Make it Permanent

by Lynn Aldrich, NBLT Chair

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA), the umbrella organization for land trusts throughout the United States, is working towards the goal of having Congress make permanent the federal tax incentive for donations of conservation easements which has been in effect since 2006 and expired on December 31st of 2009. H. R. 1831, the Conservation Easement Incentive Act, is currently co-sponsored by 265 representatives. S. 812, the Rural Heritage Conservation Extension Act, is currently co-sponsored by 41 senators. Both should be voted on in the next few months. If the Bill fails the old conservation tax incentives will remain in place.

Prior to 2006, the federal income tax deduction for a donation of a conservation easement to a land trust was limited to a maximum of 30% of a year's adjusted gross income for the year of the donation, with a carry-over of the remaining value of the donated conservation easement (also subject to the maximum 30%) for up to 5 years following the donation. These restrictions made it impossible for many landowners to take advantage of the full value of their gift. From 2006 through 2009, the limit was increased to a maximum of 50% of a year's adjusted gross income for the year of the donation, with a carry-over of the maximum 50% for up to 15 years following the deduction. For qualified farmers, up to 100% of a year's adjusted gross income could be deducted.

To understand the advantage of the current income tax incentive, consider a landowner who has an income of \$50,000 each year for 15 years. Under the IRS deductions allowed prior to 2006, when this landowner donated a conservation easement to a land trust, 30% of that landowner's \$50,000 yearly income (\$15,000) was allowed as the maximum deduction for that year. If the value of the conservation easement

was more than \$15,000, the landowner could take 30% of his \$50,000 income (an additional \$15,000) for each of 5 more years up to the value of the conservation easement. Thus, a conservation easement valued at \$1,000,000 would result in a maximum \$90,000 (\$15,000 x 6 years) total deduction for this landowner in the 6 years allowed. A conservation easement valued at only \$100,000 would also result in a maximum \$90,000 total deduction in the 6 years allowed for this landowner. A conservation easement valued at \$80,000 would result in the entire \$80,000 being deducted by this landowner in the 6-year period. If the donor's income increased over the 5 years after the deduction, the yearly allowed deduction would also increase.

Under the tax incentive effective through the end of 2009, this same conservation easement donor (if not a farmer) could deduct up to 50% of a year's income, and any carry-over of the value of the conservation easement is subject to the maximum 50% for up to 15 years following the donation. For the landowner above, the yearly deduction would be a maximum of \$25,000. The conservation easement valued at \$1,000,000 would result in a maximum \$400,000 (\$25,000 x 16 years) total deduction for this landowner in the 16 years allowed. A conservation easement valued at \$100,000 would result in the entire \$100,000 being deducted by this landowner over a 4-year period. A conservation easement valued at \$80,000 would result in the entire \$80,000 being deducted by this landowner over a 4-year period. If the donor's income increased over the 15 years after the deduction, the yearly deduction allowed would also increase.

Sixteen donors of conservation easements to NBLT have been eligible to take advantage of this special income

tax incentive since 2006. Though the enhanced federal tax deduction in place since 2006 has never been the sole incentive for our easement donors, it can make an easement donation possible for those land-rich, cash-poor landowners for whom conserving their property was never financially possible.

Although LTA and land trusts across the country are working to ensure that the enhanced tax incentive becomes permanent, landowners who are interested in placing a conservation easement on their property and want to utilize the conservation tax deduction have two choices: execute the easement now and use the existing tax incentives, or wait until Congress votes on making the enhanced incentives permanent (a vote could come any day). Either way landowners should consult their attorney and accountant to chart the best course of action. If you want to know more about the U. S. Treasury Regulations on conservation easement donations, you can find information at LTA's website:

www.lta.org/policy/tax-policy. NBLT staff can help answer questions regarding the tax incentive (though you also need to consult your own financial/tax advisor) and the process of donating a conservation easement on your property to the land trust.

Please contact your United States senator and representative to make sure they have signed on as co-sponsors to the respective bills to make the enhanced federal tax incentive for conservation easements permanent and to thank them if they've already done so. Visit <http://www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/taxincentives/federal/cosponsors> to find detailed information on who the sponsors are and who still needs to become one. Your help is much appreciated. ☀

View overlooking much of the conserved land at Bear Creek Camp in Luzerne County.



Endangered Species Protected

by Rick Koval, Director of Land Conservation



Montage Mountain Talus

North Branch Land Trust now owns an endangered plant preserve on Montage Mountain.

Earlier this year, North Branch Land Trust accepted fee title to approximately 18.27 acres of land located

on Montage Mountain, along the Lackawanna County boundary in Pittston Township, Luzerne County. By owning the property, North Branch Land Trust will protect critical habitat for a wildflower considered endangered in Pennsylvania called Appalachian Sandwort. Nearly one thousand plants occur on this site and are being studied by biologists through an agreement between

Montage Mountain Barrens



Hemingway Development (the former owner of the property), the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), and North Branch Land Trust (NBLT).

The property will be owned and managed by North Branch Land Trust and will be available for public access only by guided nature tours. For more information contact me, NBLT's Director of Land Conservation, Rick Koval, at (570) 696-1691 or koval@nblt.org. ☻



Coming Soon To A Computer Near You



NBLT is just a short time away from “going live” with our **new website and Facebook page**. The website has a whole new look and will be interactive and pretty darn jazzy! You’ll be able to access lots of information and view beautiful pictures of conserved properties. News and events will be constantly updated giving you advance notice of nature walks, programs by Rick Koval (NBLT’s naturalist and Director of Land Conservation), and other NBLT activities.

Be sure to check out NBLT on **Facebook** and become one of our first ‘friends’! ☺

Francis E. Walter Dam Paddling Trip

Land trust members and their guests are invited to join our executive director, Paul Lumia, on a paddle on the reservoir above the Francis E. Walter Dam on Sunday, September 12th. Located between Bear Creek Village and White Haven, the 80-acre reservoir offers smooth paddling and a great chance to see bald eagles and osprey. We are planning for a great time on a warm and sunny late summer day! (But...the trip will take place regardless of the weather.)

Participants must provide their own equipment. Each paddler must bring and wear a proper personal flotation device (PFD), and should bring a bag lunch and drinks.

No fee will be charged to participants. This outing is for any level of paddling ability except first-timers. Launch time is 10:00 a.m.; enter the parking area from the Bear Creek/White Haven

Road. If the dam is low please meet at the bottom parking area and if it is high, park at the middle lot. The group will paddle out to the Lehigh River, take a lunch break, and then paddle back to the launch site. The entire trip will take 3 hours. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

If you’ve hesitated to go on our annual Susquehanna River trip because it was too long a day on the water, here’s your chance to enjoy some beautiful scenery and the company of other outdoor lovers for a shorter time. To register for this activity, call the Land Trust office at (570) 696-5545 on or before Friday, September 10th. ☺



Emotions— . . .

(Continued from page 5)

2003. The process and completion of the project was a very emotional one for Gerard:

“We seem to be dreamers and storytellers, those of us who donate conservation easements. To those who want to find the courage to ‘Sign the line,’ I offer this simple advice: ‘Think of yourself as an artist of the land. Stay true to your colors and style, and the rest will fall into place.’ ”

I close out this writing with two things to keep in mind. The first is to understand that what these and all the other conservation easement donors have done may not be for you. Conserving your property is a commitment in perpetuity. The second is that many of us can only explain the desire to conserve land because we have a spiritual connection to it—the wonder, the awe of it, a gift to us from our creator. This thought is expressed in a poem written by Gerard Kipp:

“There is uniqueness here, it is the scent on the wind, cinnamon spice, and the sight of fens unspoiled.

A fire burns in our hearts for connection, a connection of our souls to a place, and a purpose, and we must rise above the estimate of ownership.

There is uniqueness here, and we shall preserve it. ” 🌻



Conservation Easement . . .

(Continued from page 4)

owns the Right to enforce the terms of the conservation easement. The Owner and all future owners retain all other property rights. Lastly, the Holder has the right to place several Conserved Property signs on the Conservation Area identifying the interest of the Holder regarding the conserved property. (We’ve found that easement donors are thrilled to have these signs posted.)

“ARTICLE 2, OWNER’S DECLARATION OF COVENANTS AND RESTRICTIONS” is the article that most landowners misinterpret. Throughout this article, it mentions and defines the restrictions or non-permissible activities within the conservation area. This article is specifically written in a way to avoid ambiguity. Certain recreational activities such as hiking or cross country skiing are allowed and mentioned in this article. Land surrounding wetlands is of utmost importance and a defined distance is established prohibiting land disturbance near any wetlands. This is referred to as a “wetland buffer zone.” Other restricted land use activities are no cutting of trees, building homes or other structures. Most landowners call this to my attention because they would like to reserve the right to commercially harvest trees or have a home built on the property. Before they ask me to immediately leave their premises or hang up the phone, I assure them these activities are allowed in the next article. Basically Article 2 takes away landowner rights, and Article 3 gives certain rights back.

“ARTICLE 3, RESERVED RIGHTS” is a very important article that mentions any and all land use activities agreed upon by the Owner and Holder. There is no such thing as “standard” reserved rights; every easement is crafted to fit a particular piece of property and its owner’s wishes for its future. Permitted activities may include the construction of residential dwellings, commercial timbering, constructing ponds, vernal pools and wetlands, and the building of roads—or the Owner may want no activities permitted at all, if the property is of extraordinary conservation value. Any permitted activities or “Reserved Rights” will need prior notification from the landowner and approval from the Land Trust. For example, NBLT will need to review a timber harvest plan prior to allowing that activity to happen, or physically visit the pro-

posed location of a new building site. For the most part, these activities will be granted providing certain conservation values of the property will not be compromised. What this means is that a timber harvest may need to begin during the colder months when the soil is frozen and firm to prevent soil erosion caused by logging machinery or may be delayed until a specific rare animal has completed its breeding cycle, migrated, hibernated or is dormant. Another example may be a request to build a home right on top of a forested ridge. If the conservation easement protects scenic viewsheds offered to the general public, a home constructed at the proposed site would damage that scenic value. In this case, the Holder may deny the intended location of the home site and suggest other, more appropriate building locations on the property.

“ARTICLE 4, HOLDER’S COVENANTS” defines the rights and responsibilities of the Holder. This article requires the Land Trust to use its best efforts to enforce the conservation easement. If the Holder fails to do so, the conservation easement may be transferred to another qualified conservation organization. If any land trust ceases to exist, its easements and their accompanying responsibilities will be transferred to another qualified conservation organization.

“ARTICLE 5, REMEDIES AND ENFORCEMENT” labels what recourse and action the Land Trust can exercise in the event of a violation. It defines the remedies available to the Holder, and requires reimbursement by the landowner of the Holder’s expenses for enforcement and litigation. This may seem controversial and unfair; however, the reality is that most, if not all, non-profit organizations have limited resources. Accepting a conservation easement on a property that the Holder has an obligation to protect and enforce in perpetuity is a burden. Prior to conserving a property, we ask the landowner to donate a very moderate Stewardship Endowment. This donation can be used only to monitor, enforce and legally defend their conservation easement. There may come a time when a violation occurs on conserved property, attempts to settle the matter amicably fail, and the matter must be settled in court. The stewardship endowment for that particular property can easily be consumed by the high costs of litigation. We have learned that most easement violations are

(Continued on page 13)

Noxen Depot News:

We were recently notified about the availability of an HO-scale kit of the Noxen Depot. Thanks to the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society, Inc., the Land Trust will receive a portion of the sale of each kit. All proceeds will be

used toward the completion of the renovation* of the Depot. There is a cost for shipping that is added when you place your order with the Society.

Here is their announcement.

*The Land Trust uses the term renovation or rehabilitation when referring to the work being done on the Depot, as the project is not classified as a "restoration" according to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Lehigh Valley Buffalo Division

Standard Station Type 3



New HO scale craftsman kit made by the N-Scale Architect exclusively for the ARHS. This style of station was built in many locations on the Buffalo Division of the LV and one was built in Pennsylvania at Noxen, Pa. Noxen was recently restored and some funds from the sales of this kit will go toward the continuing restoration efforts. Besides Noxen two

other similar stations survive at Williamsville, NY and P&L Junction, NY. Cost of this kit is \$85 and it is expected to be available by March 1, 2010. It can be ordered on the website: <http://www.anthracerailroads.org/sale/models/LVRRBuffaloDivisionDepot.php>, or by mailing a check to the ARHS, PO Box 519, Lansdale, PA 19446-0519. ☼

Conservation Easement ...

(Continued from page 12)

caused by future landowners. Many new owners of conserved lands do not have the same conservation mindset or affinity for the land as the original owners. This article was drafted for this specific reason—to uphold and defend conservation easements against violators.

The final section, "ARTICLE 6, GENERAL PROVISIONS," describes the rights and obligations of the landowner. This article states the Owner is responsible for all property taxes, levies and/or assessments. It also mentions indemnification of the landowner from any liability if an employee or representative of the Holder becomes injured while conducting conservation easement activities such as baseline inventories or monitoring visits. The article addresses any amendments or modification of the conservation easement if such (rare) circumstances arise. It states that all covenants run with the land, that the easement's terms apply to the next legal owner, and that the Owner must notify the Holder no later than 30 days after the sale of the property.

The last few pages in the conservation easement are signature pages; notarized signatures are required from the landowner and the authorized representative of the land trust.

I hope this conservation easement summary broadens your knowledge of a complicated document that assures a rewarding outcome for both the landowner and all of us who live in Northeastern Pennsylvania. ☼



The Luzerne Conservation District—A Community Asset

by Josh Longmore, District Manager



The Luzerne Conservation District is a not-for-profit, local agency whose mission is to provide for the conservation of the land and water resources in Luzerne County by promoting public awareness, providing technical assistance, and encouraging regulatory compliance.

We accomplish our mission through cooperation with landowners and land users; by working with other public and private organizations; and by increasing citizen awareness of the responsibility to be good stewards of natural resources. The district's primary types of activities include regulatory/voluntary compliance, technical assistance, and education/outreach.

As one of the sixty-six conservation districts in Pennsylvania (one for each county except Philadelphia), the Luzerne Conservation District is involved in developing local programs and implementing on-the-ground practices to protect the soil and water resources of Luzerne County. District programs are developed in order to best serve the specific environmental needs of the resources and people of Luzerne County. They include our Erosion &

Sediment Pollution Control, Agricultural Conservation, Watershed Stewardship, Dirt & Gravel Roads, West Nile Virus Control, and Conservation Education & Outreach programs.

The District is an excellent source of information and technical assistance for any landowner interested in learning about best practices for protecting their soil and water resources. ☼

CONTACT US AT:

Luzerne Conservation District

485 Smiths Pond Road, Shavertown, PA 18708

Phone: (570) 674-7991 • Fax: (570) 674-7989

www.luzernecd.org

Land Trust Receives Award

On Saturday night, February 20, 2010, NBLT received the *Stanley M. Sowa, Jr. Conservationist of the Year Award* from the Luzerne Conservation District at their annual banquet. Each year the district recognizes individuals or organizations who share Stan's conservation ethic.

Stan Sowa was actively involved in and very accomplished with regards to conservation in Northeast Pennsylvania. Many people remember Stan for his 20 years as co-host of Pennsylvania Outdoor Life on WNEP-TV 16 or as a deputy wildlife conservation officer for 28 years with the PA Game Commission. Still others may remember Stan as a Professional Land Surveyor where he served at Smith Miller & Associates Inc. and also at Clough Harbour & Associates LLP. Stan received many awards and recognitions for his work as a surveyor and for his conservation and sportsman efforts.

Stan served the Luzerne Conservation District for many years as a member of the Board of Directors. He was



NBLT receives the 2010 Stanley M. Sowa, Jr., Conservationist of the Year Award from the Luzerne Conservation District. Shown left to right: Paul Lumia, Lynn Aldrich, and Josh Longmore.

the Chairman of the Board for several years. The Conservation District's annual Conservationist of the Year

award is named after Stan to honor his significant contribution to natural resource conservation. ☼

2009 Holiday Gathering

NBLT's annual Holiday Gathering seems to get bigger and better every year—so much so that this year we had to find a larger location to host it. Eighty-one members, their guests, and NBLT staff met at The Appletree Terrace in Dallas on December 22 to celebrate the holiday season. The night was blustery and very cold but inside there was much merriment, delicious food and many things to celebrate.

Executive Director Paul Lumia bestowed honors and awards on several individuals. Two members of the Board of Directors were resigning effective at the end of December. Mary Louise Faber was recognized for her passionate service to the organization during the past three years. She was unable to attend the event, but Paul promised to deliver the lovely bouquet of flowers to her home. Sarah P. Carr was present to accept her flowers and many accolades and well wishes and a sincere thank-you for 15 years of service and dedication to the Land Trust, most of which were spent as secretary of the organization.

The North Branch Land Trust 2009 Award of Appreciation was presented to Scott Ciravolo, owner of Tree Design in Trucksville, for outstanding and



Scott Ciravolo, Paul Lumia, Sarah P. Carr, and Linda Thoma

dedicated work in producing unique and creative printed materials for the Land Trust's 10th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction. Scott, accompanied by his wife Kelly, attended the event.

Finally, a very surprised Linda Thoma received a service award for her 14 years of dedication to this organization. As many of you know, Linda was NBLT's very first employee, hired way back in early 1996. She was honored with a framed certificate and a commissioned piece of artwork by local and international talent Leigh Pawl-

ing of Dallas. Paul told the audience that "this award was very difficult to pull off without Linda finding out about it, because it's her job to know about the minutest details at the office." He and fellow staffers Rick Koval and Barb Romanansky were elated that they had done it. Linda was—in her words—"clueless." Addressing the membership, Linda indicated that her service to the Land Trust has been her life—"eating, sleeping, breathing everything Land Trust, and I'm in this for the long haul." ☼

Results of NBLT Natural Gas Drilling Poll

There were 212 polls returned by NBLT supporters either to NBLT's office or entered online. The questions are presented below with the percent (%) who responded for each choice. The percents (%) may not add up to 100% due to missing responses.

1. Do you support gas exploration and drilling in Northeastern Pennsylvania?
Yes 40% No 36% Undecided 24%
2. Have you been keeping abreast of the pros and cons of extracting natural gas from the Marcellus Shale? Yes 92% No 6%
3. A large amount of water is needed in the gas extraction process. Do you think the regional water supply is adequate to handle the needs of the gas drilling industry operating in the region?
Yes 22% No 42% Unsure 36%
4. Water with chemicals added is injected into a gas well to a depth of 6000 to 8000 feet to help release the gas. This mixture is then extracted and treated. Do you think there is a high, medium, low, or no likelihood that this water and chemical mixture will contaminate ground water?
High 43% Medium 30% Low 23% No 2%

5. Do you think that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulations governing natural gas extraction are sufficient to ensure that waste water from gas drilling sent to a water treatment facility will be free from pollutants prior to discharge into any rivers and streams?
Yes 14% No 64% Unsure 21%
6. Do you think that DEP regulations governing natural gas extraction are sufficient to ensure the public's health and safety?
Yes 14% No 61% Unsure 25%
7. If NBLT were to sign a "No Development" lease do you think this would have a positive, negative, or no effect on the current and future gas drilling operations in the region?
Positive 23% Negative 15% No effect 58%
8. It is anticipated that tapping the natural gas in the Marcellus Shale will provide tremendous economic benefits to residents of NEPA. Do you think the economic benefits are worth the possible environmental risks inherent in the gas extraction process? Yes 26% No 50% Unsure 23%
9. Do you think there is justification for NBLT to sign a "No Development" lease if the monies re-

- ceived from the lease of the land and the sale of the natural gas were used to protect more properties, fund other conservation projects, and endow the organization? Yes 53% No 28% Unsure 16%
10. If NBLT were to sign a "No Development" lease on the Howland property, would you see that action as compromising the organization's mission? The NBLT mission states:
The North Branch Land Trust works in partnership with landowners and their communities to conserve the scenic, natural and working landscapes that sustain us.
Yes 35% No 48% Unsure 15%
11. If NBLT signed a "No Development" lease would you be less likely or more likely to support NBLT or have no change in your support of NBLT?
Less likely 21% More likely 9% No change 67%
12. Many gas leases have been signed in the region and drilling operations are in the beginning stages. Do you think NBLT should wait for the industry to mature further before considering a "No Development" lease, sign a "No Development" lease now, or do not sign a "No Development" lease at any time?
Wait 42% Sign now 32% Do not sign 21%

11th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

by Linda Thoma, Director of Operations



NBLT 11th Annual Dinner Committee members are shown L-R: Jim Shoemaker, Mike Weaver, John McCarthy, Doug Gaudet, Kathy Dunsmuir, Gary Williams, Janice Gorman, Jim Gorman, Barb Toczko-Maculloch, Paul Lumia, Barb Romanansky, and Linda Thoma. Absent from photo: Melissa Duryea-Gaudet, Marie Duryea, Jean Flack, and Terri Kosakowski.

North Branch Land Trust's biggest fund raising event of the year is just around the corner—our annual dinner. We invite you to our 11th Annual Dinner and Auctions on Thursday, May 20, 2010, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the beautiful and historic Westmoreland Club in downtown Wilkes-Barre. This event not only gives us an opportunity to inform community members about the ways land conservation contributes to a vigorous economy, vibrant communities and a healthy environment, it also provides vital financial resources to support our mission.

Join us and catch glimpses of our 2009 successes! Enjoy a cocktail hour and fabulous meal with exciting silent and live auctions respectively, and live, jazzy bluegrass music provided by the Douglas Smith Trio. This year's Community Stewardship Award will be presented to Fred Valentine, president of Llewellyn & McKane, Inc. In addition, we are honoring Ralph "Bud" Cook, Northeastern Pennsylvania Program Director of The Nature Conservancy, with our Lifetime Achievement Award.

Douglas A. Gaudet, President and CEO of Penn Millers Insurance Company, is serving as the dinner chairman and Kathleen Dunsmuir of PNC Bank is this year's auction chair. Other dinner

committee members include Terri Kosakowski of M&T Bank; John B. McCarthy of M&T Bank; James T. Shoemaker, Esq., of Hourigan, Kluger and Quinn; Michael D. Weaver of Berkshire Asset Management; Barbara Toczko-Maculloch of M&T Bank; Gary Williams, North Branch Land Trust Vice Chair; James T. Gorman of First Keystone National Bank; Melissa Duryea-Gaudet; Marie Duryea; Jean Flack; Janice Gorman; and Barbara Romanansky, Linda Thoma and Paul Lumia of North Branch Land Trust.

Several fabulous items have already been committed to our silent and live auctions. At this writing we have a one-week stay at a mountain cabin in Telluride, Colorado; a one-week stay at a condo in Telluride, Colorado; a one-day guided fly fishing trip with Joe Ackourey; a cruiser bike; collectible gold coins; a kayak; a two-night stay in New York City at an Upper West Side apartment; and a ½-hour flight in a World War Two U.S. Navy SNJ-5 plane. As always, Rick Koval, well-known naturalist, field staff member of WNEP-TV's *Pennsylvania Outdoor Life*, and NBLT's Director of Land Conservation, will have a few of his spectacular nature photographs in the silent auction.

Advertisers, sponsors and individuals interested in participating in the event are welcome to contact Linda Thoma at the Land Trust office for details at 696-5545, or visit our website, www.nblt.org. Seats are \$75 per person. In addition, gifts to the silent auction will be accepted up to May 12th. We hope you can join us for this wonderful evening! ☼



*Ralph
"Bud" Cook*



*Fred
Valentine*

10th Annual NBLT River Trip

Howland Preserve to White's Ferry • Saturday July 31, 2010

Come join us for the 10th Annual NBLT River Trip on the North Branch of the Susquehanna River.

We will meet at the Howland Preserve at 9:00 a.m. to begin shuttling. A quick talk and tour of the Howland Preserve is scheduled for 10:00 a.m., with the river launch at 10:30 a.m. Endless Mountain Outfitters (EMO) will offer a morning shuttle leaving at 9:00 a.m. from the Howland Preserve down river to the PFBC boat launch at White's Ferry, just north of Keelersburg. We expect a sunny day for this 13-mile paddle! Bring binoculars (eagles are nesting near the launch), proper footwear for water, plenty of sunscreen and bug spray, a snack to eat before we launch, drinking water, and your lunch. We will stop at LaGrange Island, a river island at the ten-mile mark, for lunch and river education.

EMO offers recreational and some touring kayaks for rent. They are very stable and user friendly. Tandem kayaks and



canoes are also available. The recreational kayaks are \$45, touring kayaks are \$47, and tandem kayaks and canoes are \$54 per day. PFDs and paddles are included. A lesson on how to kayak will be given. **Prices include a donation to North Branch Land Trust.** Visit EMO's web page for more information or to register on line: www.emo444.com; or phone them directly for reservations: (570) 746-9140; or register by e-mail: kayaks@ptd.net.

Reservations are required.

If you bring your own boat, registration for the event is \$15 per boat. Bring your boat to the Howland Preserve, and EMO will shuttle you either prior to the float or afterwards. If you need livery for your boat from White's Ferry, there will be a \$5 additional charge.

If you have any questions, call David or Melody Buck at (570) 746-9140 or email kayaks@ptd.net. ☼

New Directors for the Land Trust

by Linda Thoma, Director of Operations

Two new Board members are serving North Branch Land Trust as of the first of January.

First, we welcome Jill A. Martin, CPA. She resides in Back Mountain and brings with her a plethora of tax management experience for the individual, estates, for-profits and not-for-profits. She currently serves as Senior Tax Manager for ParenteBeard, LLC (formerly Parente Randolph, LLC) in Wilkes-Barre, PA. She joined the latter in 1987. Prior to that she was an Engineering Assistant Specialist for the **United States Air Force**. "I worked with an environmental engineer who introduced me to land conservation. Over the last few years, I attended the annual dinners and found the speakers to be extremely interesting which re-ignited my passion to land conservation and environmental issues." Loving outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling,



Jill A. Martin, CPA



Lissa Bryan-Smith

and kayaking, and being an empty nester this Fall is a combination that is permitting Jill to go back to school to pursue a Masters of Environmental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. "Through my professional experience with conservation easements, my Penn education, and my personal passion for the outdoors I am looking forward to working with the other Board Members and staff of the NBLT."

Second, we welcome Lissa Bryan-Smith, Chief Administrative Officer of the Regional Ambulatory Campus at Geisinger South Wilkes-Barre. "I grew up on a farm in a very rural section of western Lycoming County and I watched that community, like many other similar communities, convert from farm country to housing developments." That always bothered her. Today, she and her husband, Richard, have chosen to join their neighbors in reclaiming downtown Wilkes-Barre—where they have bought a Victorian house—as a wonderful place to live. They are firm believers that "if our cities and towns are again viable options to live and raise families it will help us conserve our open spaces." Lissa has found some time in her busy schedule to devote to helping NBLT conserve farmland and open spaces. ☼

Annual Appeal Donors

Kudos to all who gave end of the year gifts to NBLT's 2009 Annual Appeal Campaign! One hundred thirty-seven donors contributed a grand total of \$15,218 to help fund our conservation efforts. We appreciate your generous gifts, and hope you will continue to support us!

November 15, 2009 - March 15, 2010

A.J. Lupas Insurance Agency Inc.
 Dr. Lynn K. Aldrich
 Back Mountain Bloomers Garden Club
 Cindy Beaumariage & Rick Mooney
 Bergman Foundation
 Berkshire Asset Management
 David & Phyllis Billings
 The Black Horse Foundation, Inc.
 Paul Bookstein
 Barbara Bradley
 Dr. Richard A. Brown
 Frank J. & Lenora T. Broyan
 Carole & Bill Burak
 Dr. Michael &
 Deborah Klayman Callahan
 Sarah Carr & Durland Edwards
 Lee Case & Graysha Harris
 The Charles & Denny Barber
 Family Fund
 Frank E.P. & Marion Conyngham
 Corbett Insurance Group
 Cornell Iron Works
 Carl Crispell

Julie Lumia Cronauer
 Tom & Laurie Cywinski
 Robert C. & Lavona Daniels
 Joseph & Nan DeMarco
 Paul & Sucheta P. Dembowski
 Dreier Auto Sales
 Steven Dressler
 Edwards & Amerise, CPA
 Ronald Ertle
 Eb & Mary Louise Faber
 Dr. Peter A. & Jane Feinstein
 Pam Fendrock & Mark E. Jones
 First Impression Textile Services Inc.
 Dianne & Judd B. Fitze
 Capt. Alan B. Flanagan, USN (Ret.)
 John C. & Joan S. Foster
 Michael & Susan Frank
 Rob Friedman
 Joe & Steve Germick
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 James & Janice Gorman
 Greater Wilkes-Barre
 Chamber of Business & Industry

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 Jack & Karen Hoover
 Jack & Margaret Hoover
 Alice M. & Frank R. Hughes
 Carol Husa
 Ray & Julie Iwanowski
 John Kaminski
 Bill, Kim & Kaelee Kane
 Charles & Nell-Ann Kappler
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 Stephen B. & Estella Killian
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 Anthony J. & Vivian Korch
 Leonard & Mary Koval
 Kovalchik, Kollar & Co., LLP
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 John J. & Jill V. Kryston
 Dr. William J. & Nancie Krywicki
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Wish List

Global Information System (GIS) Software Package, \$1,500

Used Quad or 4x4 Utility Vehicle, \$2,000

Underwriting of Annual Training Expenses, \$1,000

Upgrade on Database Software, \$500

Used Compact Utility Tractor with Brush Hog, \$10,000

HP Duplexer (an add-on to existing printer), \$399

**Additional Computer Memory
 for 4 PCs, \$200**

**Cannon imageRunner 1025iF Copier,
 \$1,750**

**NBLT Boundary Markers
 (for use on NBLT-owned lands), \$550**



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Donors

(Continued from page 19)

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2010 Calendar

- May 15** **5th Annual Springtime Bird-a-thon**
(date depends on weather; see www.NBLT.org for details)
- May 20** **11th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction**
Westmoreland Club, Wilkes-Barre (details in this issue)
- June 18-20** **RiverFest Weekend**
includes Confluence Art Show, music, environmental education, kids' games and activities, and 3 paddling trips (Fri., Sat. & Sun.); River Common and Nesbitt Park, Wilkes-Barre (open to all; for registration details call Penn State Extension at (570) 825-1701 or visit www.rivercommon.org)
- June 29-30** **"Preserving Family Lands: The Benefits of Land Conservation, (A Tax and Estate Planning Seminar)" with Attorney Stephen J. Small**
Mohegan Sun, Plains (details in this issue)
- July 31** **10th Annual NBLT River Trip**
(open to all; details in this issue)
- August 15** **2010 Annual Members' Picnic at Bear Creek Camp in Luzerne County**
(invitations will be mailed to NBLT members)
- September 12** **F.E. Walter Dam Paddle**
(open to NBLT members and their guests; details in this issue)
- September 15** **Hawkwatch for Senior Citizens at Council Cup**
(date depends on weather; see www.NBLT.org for details)
Visit our website for details, www.nblt.org.

