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CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

February 2009

Editor – Deb Gehringer

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FCVC Beneficiary of Armstrong Senior Golf Classic

by John Tautin, FCVC President

Armstrong is a leading provider of television, internet and telephone services. In addition to serving tens of thousands of customers in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia, and Kentucky, Armstrong is known for its community service and support of charitable organizations. One of the fund-raising events that Armstrong sponsors in this region is the annual Senior Golf Classic at the Country Club of Meadville. Armstrong selected the French Creek Valley Conservancy to be the beneficiary of its 2008 Classic.

Armstrong marketing coordinator Joan Kocan organized the Classic, enlisting co-sponsors and volunteers, and coordinating with Country Club staff. The all day Classic was held on August 14th. The weather cooperated, and more than 20 teams of teams of four golfers participated. FCVC volunteers Deb Gehringer, Tim Hecei, Joan Galli, John Tautin, Karen Styborski, Jeff Lang and Jim Lang helped with the administration the event.

The combination of superb organization, a full turn out of golfers, a great venue, good food, and nice day made for a very successful event.

Following a fine banquet at the Clubhouse, numerous prizes were awarded to winning teams and individuals, but the big winner was the French Creek Valley Conservancy.



Pictured above: Coordinator of the Armstrong Senior Golf Classic, Joan Kocan

HONORARIUMS AND MEMORIALS

A memorial donation was recently made in honor of:

Ann Etter

by Richard Friedberg
Miriam Bowman - Bob, Nancy &
Heather Artman - Bradley Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Rothman

The Conservancy graciously accepts donations in memory of those who appreciated French Creek or in honor of individuals for any occasion.

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Crawford County Natural Heritage Survey On-line

Most of us who spend any amount of time in the outdoors of Crawford County know that there are some pretty fine natural places and resources out there. Just how much there is might surprise you though. To “see”, take virtual tour via the Crawford County Natural Heritage Survey now on line at:

http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/CNAI_PDFs/Crawford%20County%20NHI%202008-WEB.pdf

All counties in Pennsylvania have Natural Heritage Surveys. The surveys are comprehensive inventories of plants and animals, and the natural communities and habitats that are important to these living resources. The County Natural Heritage Surveys are funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and done in cooperation with County governments. The surveys are conducted by trained ecologists and typically take two years of field work, with visits to many sites on public land and, with landowner permission, on private lands. Crawford County’s survey was done by staff of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, in cooperation with Crawford County Planning Commission. Survey results identify important natural resources for consideration in state, county and local development plans. Municipalities, agencies, and businesses all benefit from having up to date natural heritage information in advance of planned developments. And the County Natural Heritage Surveys have a big side benefit: they are a boon to botanists, birders, hunters, anglers, and all who appreciate nature.

With more than 200 pages, the Crawford County Natural Heritage Survey has a wealth of information, including discussions of soils and geology, descriptions of plant communities and stream communities, individual species accounts, maps and photos. The survey is conveniently organized by township, and each township has its own map of biologically significant areas. Not surprising, French Creek and its major tributaries show up as special areas with high biological diversity, reminding us of the importance of the work being done by the French Creek Valley Conservancy and its partners.

Creek Connections ‘Creek Camp’ Works in FC Watershed

Creek Connections is beginning to prepare for its fourth annual Creek Camp. Creek Camp is a weeklong experiential learning camp for rising 10th and 11th graders. The main focus of this camp is freshwater ecology through the students to getting hands on experience working in the waterways of northwestern Pennsylvania, especially the French Creek watershed.

A few of the activities from past years include macroinvertebrate sampling in Woodcock Creek, a float trip down French Creek, electro-fishing and searching for the infamous hellbender with herpetologist April Claus. Students get a fun firsthand look at the fieldwork needed to monitor and preserve this watershed.

Last year students from Costa Rica and Germany attended Creek Camp. They were immersed knee deep in the local culture as well as the local streams.

In previous years this camp was exclusively for students from the Pittsburgh area. However, this year appli-

cations are being accepted from all students. The application process is competitive so students are asked for a reference from a teacher or other educator.



FCVC PARTNERS WITH PALMIERO TOYOTA SCION

As a 2009 FCVC Membership promotion, we are offering a **FREE** one year membership to the Conservancy with the purchase of any environmentally friendly vehicle.



Thank you Palmiero Toyota Scion—Meadville

Armstrong Golf Classic – *continued from front page*

When the final accounting was done, we received a check for \$6,000. FCVC will use the funds to offset annual operating costs and to start a stewardship fund.

We thank Armstrong for its support, with special thanks to Joan Kocan for organizing the Armstrong Senior Golf Classic. We also thank the Classic co-sponsors: Meadville Medical Center, Greyfox, Travaglini Enterprises, North-

west Savings Bank, The Meadville Tribune, WICU TV 12, WJET TV 24, Alloptic Inc., Fine Print, James J. Duratz, Jim, Jeff and Rick Lang, Forever Broadcasting, and Northwestern Rural Electric Coop. Their generosity benefits not only FCVC, but all of the communities, people and wildlife that benefit from having a healthy of French Creek watershed.

**IT'S NOT TOO EARLY
TO SUBMIT
PHOTOS OF THE
FRENCH CREEK
WATERSHED**

THE FRENCH CREEK VALLEY
CONSERVANCY

IS CREATING OUR

2010 CALENDAR

FEATURING
PHOTOS OF FRENCH CREEK
—ALL SEASONS NEEDED—

**IF YOU'D LIKE YOUR PHOTO AND
NAME PUBLISHED:**

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR PHOTO,
A DESCRIPTION OF WHERE AND WHEN IT WAS
PHOTOGRAPHED, AND YOUR NAME TO:

**FRENCH CREEK VALLEY
CONSERVANCY**
PO Box 434
MEADVILLE PA 16335

**IF YOUR BUSINESS WOULD LIKE TO
SPONSOR A MONTH AND HAVE YOUR
NAME AND LOGO ADVERTISED
CONTACT THE
CONSERVANCY OFFICE AT
814.337.4321
OR
EMAIL frenchcreek@windstream.net**

**Major Tax Incentive to Help Landowners
Conserve Land Extended**

In 2008 Congress extended, through 2009, an incentive that has greatly enhanced the tax benefits of donating a voluntary conservation agreement or easement. If you, or someone you know in the French Creek Watershed, own land with important natural resources and you are considering permanently protecting it by donating a voluntary conservation agreement, 2009 may be your year to do so. You can conserve your land while maintaining your private property rights and possibly realizing significant federal tax benefits.

These incentives make it easier for average Americans, including working family farmers, to donate an easement.

The legislation:

- ✦ Raises the maximum deduction you can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from **30%** of your adjusted gross income (AGI) to **50%**;
- ✦ Allows you to deduct up to **100%** of your AGI if you qualify as a farmer; and
- ✦ Increases the number of years over which you can take deductions from 6 years to **16 years**.

These incentives allow many modest income landowners to deduct much more than they could under the old rules, bringing increased fairness to the tax code. The incentives have been in place since 2006, and are credited with increasing by acreage protected with donated easements by 50% around the Country. The program has been popular with both landowners and conservancies, and there is widespread support for making it permanent.

To learn more about the program, contact Tim Hecei at the FCVC office 814-337-4321.

—ON SALE—

FCVC STILL HAS A FEW
2009 CALENDARS FOR SALE
AT THE REDUCED PRICE OF \$5.00 EACH

Hurry in, they're going fast...

French Creek Valley Conservancy
P.O. Box 434
Meadville PA 16335

NONPROFIT ORG
PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MEADVILLE PA
PERMIT NO. 337

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Your continued support is greatly appreciated, if you know someone who would be interested in a membership, please pass this on...

Yes!

I want to support local conservation efforts in the French Creek Valley!

I have enclosed my check for a yearly membership
payable to FCVC for:

- \$25 Bald Eagle
- \$40 Northern Riffleshell
- \$75 Spotted Darter
- \$100 River Otter
- \$250 Hellbender
- Other \$ _____

- Corporate Creek Protectors:
- \$250 Silver
 - \$500 Gold
 - \$1000 Platinum

- We would like to be recognized
as corporate members at events
and on brochures and mailings.

Please return this form with your payment to:
FCVC Membership
P.O. Box 434
Meadville PA 16335



Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____

Let's keep French Creek beautiful!