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CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009

Editor – Deb Gehringer

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WPC Hosts Landowner Workshop

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy hosted a landowner workshop on May 12 at Allegheny College. The purpose of the workshop was to educate landowners in the French Creek watershed about using conservation easements to protect properties. It followed a similar workshop geared for attorneys, realtors, and financial advisors. The featured speaker at both workshops was Jane Hamilton, Esq., a Colorado attorney who is an expert on easement procedures, tax benefits for landowners, and applicable state and federal laws. Workshop attendees got a thorough introduction to the legal, accounting and tax issues associated with conservation easements. Representatives from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the French Creek Valley Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy were on hand to add to discussions and answer questions after the landowner workshop.

The process of establishing a conservation easement can be complicated and lengthy, but the rewards for landowners can be significant with tax savings and the satisfaction of seeing one's property protected in perpetuity. If you or someone you know in the French Creek watershed are interested in learning more about how conservation easements can help a landowners meet land protection goals, please contact your FCVC office at 814-337-4321. Good, general information on conservation easements and other land protection options can be found on the web sites of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association <http://conserveland.org/> and the Land Trust Alliance <http://www.landtrustalliance.org/>. The French Creek Valley Conservancy is a member of both.

HONORARIUMS AND MEMORIALS

The Conservancy graciously accepts donations in memory of those who appreciated French Creek or in honor of individuals celebrating special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, and graduations.

**FCVC WELCOMES
NEW CORPORATE MEMBER
PALMIERO TOYOTA SCION**

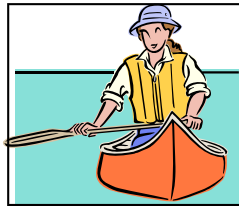


FCVC member and landowner Don Snyder consults with WPC's Ann Sand

FCVC Annual Cleanup Date Changes for 2009

Our 17th annual French Creek Clean up event will be held on Saturday, September 12th, 2009 instead of mid-June as it has been the past several years. The picnic after the creek cleanup will be at Bicentennial Park from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Some changes this year will include group competitions, prizes for trash findings, live music, and more.

To volunteer or for more information call 814-337-4321 or email frenchcreek@windstream.net



Mark your calendars today!

FCVC Welcomed Intern

Katie Flood, a Junior majoring in Environmental Studies at Allegheny College interned with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council this spring. Under the guidance of Board Member Andy Walker and Project Manager Tim Hecei, she focused on two main projects at the French Creek Valley Conservancy. Her first project was to organize, update and identify missing information in the Conservancy's existing land protection files.

During the second half of the semester she researched the land trust accreditation process and identified policies and procedures the FCVC would need to apply to the Land Trust Alliance for accreditation.

GO GREEN!

e-mail frenchcreek@windstream.net if you would like to receive your newsletter and other correspondence by e-mail only.

Help your watershed by going paperless!

Creek Connections Symposium

On April 3rd 2009, Creek Connections held its annual Northwest PA student research symposium at the campus center at Allegheny College. The French Creek Valley Conservancy was among those who exhibited, in addition to partner Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

Twenty-one schools with approximately 600 students attended the event where students presented their work in posters and in oral presentations ranging from demonstrating various practices and green products available to us for more environmentally friendly homes to the effects of constructing dams in our streams and rivers.

The symposium is held annually at Allegheny College and in the Pittsburgh area.



NW Pennsylvania Environmental Council Director, Andy Walker (left); Creek Connections Coordinator, Wendy Kedzierski (center); FCVC Project Manager, Tim Hecei (right)

Save the Date for the 3rd Annual Guys Mills Heritage Fest

The 3rd annual Guys Mills Heritage Fest will be held on June 27, 2009 from 10 a. m. -3 p. m. This day-long family-oriented event will feature exhibits, nature walks, demonstrations, crafts, presentations, food, etc.

Activities and exhibits will be featured both at the headquarters of the Erie National Wildlife Refuge and at various venues in the nearby town of Guys Mills as a way of increasing awareness of the Refuge and strengthening its connection to the community. Be sure to attend this event...

All are welcome!

Join Us in a Birding Trip

The French Creek watershed hosts 4 of Pennsylvania's 83 Important Bird Areas, the best known being Conneaut-Geneva Marsh (State Game Lands 213). It is popular with western Pennsylvania birders because of its high diversity of species, including regional rarities such as Black Tern, Prothonotary Warbler, Common Moorhen, Sandhill Crane, and American Bittern.

Join FCVC President and birder John Tautin on Saturday, June 6 for a birding trip to Conneaut-Geneva Marsh. The trip will depart at 8:00 a.m. from Aunt Bee's Restaurant at the intersection of Rts 19 and 258 just off I-79 (see map at:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?q=17408%20Smock%20Dr,%2016314&hl=en>

Be sure to bring binoculars. This trip is suitable for people all ages and birding skills. Birding will be done from roadside stops and relatively short, easy walks. Expect to finish by 11:00 a.m., or noon at the latest.

Call or e-mail John Tautin to confirm your participation at 814-763-6461 or jtautin@windstream.net



After They Drill, Who Pays the Bill?

Invest natural gas revenues in our land, water, wildlife and communities.

Write to your state senator, representative, and/or Governor Rendell to support a fair and reasonable tax on the extraction of natural gas with the dedication of a portion of the tax to the Environmental Stewardship Fund (Growing Greener) as well as to the PA Fish & Boat and Game Commissions.

Such taxes will replace funds in existing programs used for conservation projects. If these funds are not replaced, viable projects may be delayed or no longer possible.

To find your elected officials, learn about other opportunities to get involved, and for more information visit landandwater.org

The FCVC also encourages you to support HR 1831 and S. 812. These bills make permanent the incentives that greatly enhance tax benefits of donating a voluntary conservation agreement or easement. For more information visit <http://www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/taxincentives/federal/cosponsors>

...from the FCVC Project Manager

I recently attended the 7th Annual Pennsylvania Land Conference entitled "*Confluence 2009 Connecting Communities to Creeks*" held at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College, PA.

This conference was jointly presented by Pennsylvania Land Trust Association and Chesapeake Bay Foundation. The three day conference had full day educational sessions on Thursday and Friday and three concurrent 1 1/2 hour sessions during Saturday. In all, there were twelve topics offered for the full day sessions on Thursday and Friday with nearly forty topics offered for the three concurrent sessions on Saturday. The subjects covered everything you can imagine for conservation and then some. The choices were excellent and made selecting one topic over another difficult. For the courses I attended, the presenters were well organized and very experienced in their respective fields. Each session gave plenty of opportunity for discussion amongst the group. The entire conference is a great place to meet and establish contacts in this field.

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association serves approximately eighty organizations like ours and is a key component for protecting the conservation values we all need. I am glad that the French Creek Valley Conservancy is a member as training is invaluable.

Tim Hecei

French Creek Valley Conservancy
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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: _____
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City/State/Zip: _____
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Let's keep French Creek beautiful!