



NEWSLETTER

Volume 20, Issue 2 April 2011

CACHING WITH THE CONSERVANCY 2011

On June 4, 2011, the Westmoreland Conservancy, in conjunction with the Municipality of Murrysville and SLAM, will hold a day long geocaching event, a perfect opportunity to start geocaching, hone your geocaching skills, and meet other geocachers. This family-oriented event will be filled with geocaching, nature hikes, nature related talks and activities.

Geocaching is a fun sport enjoyed by families, groups and individuals from all over the world. There are no special skills involved and anyone can enjoy the sport. Containers are hidden in forests, suburbs, urban areas, and near historical sites. Then, coordinates are posted online at a geocaching site (e.g. Geocaching.com). Others download these coordinates to a GPS to find these unique, fascinating or beautiful places.

There will be a **Welcome** address at the Townsend Park Lower Pavilion at 8AM, and various programs will be presented at this location throughout the day. **Registration** begins at **8:15 AM at the Upper Pavilion**. This area will also serve as Information Central. SLAM will provide hot dogs from 11:30 AM through 12:30 PM. Pre-registration is required to attend the evening picnic at 5PM.

Donations are gratefully accepted. For more information or to RSVP, please contact the Westmoreland Conservancy at wnewsletter@comcast.net.

SPRING MIGRATION ROAD TRIP

It's that time of year again! Spring migration is at hand and Crane Creek is the place. Crane Creek is an important location, as this is where an amazing variety of migratory birds stop to rest and eat before a long, dangerous flight over the Great Lakes on their way North.

We are planning a full day at Crane Creek State Park (Ohio) on Saturday May 7th. Depending on how many will attend we will leave either the night before or at 3am the same day. Anyone interested in going please call Shelly Tichy (724.325.5523) as soon as possible, so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Once the geocache is found, an entry is made in the on-site logbook and online in order to share the finder's thoughts, insights or even just a quick thank you to the owner (hider) of the geocache. Often, the geocacher will trade for "swag"; goodies hidden inside the geocache.

There will be caches for participants of all ages and experience levels to do at their own pace. The event caches can be found on Westmoreland Conservancy properties as well as Murrysville parks and historic locations, so come and explore our beautiful town! For those who enjoy a slightly more sedentary experience, there will be handicapped-accessible nature and geocaching themed talks held throughout the day.

Come and join us. The opportunities are endless and there is sure to be something to appeal to you!

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CARING FOR CAYWOOD

The **Caywood Nature Reserve** is the newest of the Westmoreland Conservancy properties. It is strategically located along an east-west corridor pictured by the early visionaries within the Conservancy.

Jane Caywood owned 2 parcels totaling 137 acres. 102 acres stretched from Beulah Lane to Evans Road. Her house stood on the 35 acres north and east of Beulah. Midway through negotiations to acquire these parcels, Jane passed away. It seemed that it wasn't to be. Much to our delight, we found that Jane had left 34 acres to the Westmoreland Conservancy in her will.

While the land noted had originally been along the Evans Road side of the 102-acre parcel, the heirs and courts approved switching that designation to the smaller parcel which was situated along that east-west corridor. Subdividing and purchasing two acres south of Beulah provided access to a public road (Hills Church), and the Caywood family generously donated the 5.3 acres of the property situated west of Hills Church. That donation brought us to within less than 800 feet of the easternmost end of the King Reserve. Subsequent right-of-way agreements with Shagbark Development and Dominion Gas closes that gap and allows passage from the Walter Reserve on Wiestertown Road, through Murrysville Community Park and the Caywood Reserve to Potter's Corner on Crowfoot Road. (see DHCT article)



Westmoreland County approved our application for a Block Grant and demolition of Jane's house and garage began in early March. Photos were taken documenting the progress and some are posted on the Westmoreland Conservancy Facebook page. Upon completion there will be a rustic seating area installed, a rest stop in Jane's memory.



Our new parking area along Hills Church Road is scheduled for construction in April and early May.



Completion is planned to coordinate with the June 4th Caching with the Conservancy event and June 18th hike along the Don Harrison Community Trail.

Photos Contributed by Shelly Tichy and Sohail Khwaja

ACCREDITATION PROGRESS

The Westmoreland Conservancy is continuing its quest toward accreditation . We are making steady progress and are on track with our paperwork for the registration deadlines.

In the February meeting the Board of Governors approved the following that will serve as the organization's guiding principles.

Vision

The Westmoreland Conservancy will act to preserve land and natural resources, connect green spaces and help balance Nature and development by protecting rural landscapes and woodlands for all generations.

Mission

To acquire land that conserves the rural and rustic nature of Western Pennsylvania. We may also partner with other entities to achieve this goal.

Slogan

Protecting Nature's home, enriching ours.

Goals - Five Year Plan

Goal 1: Strengthen the Organization (2011).

Goal 2: Manage and monitor the reserves and enforce restrictions (2011-2016).

Goal 3: Complete Caywood Reserve (2011).

Goal 4: Build the effectiveness of the Board and Volunteers (2012).

Goal 5: Obtain and manage funds in a fiscally responsible manner (2011-2013).

Goal 6: Promote voluntary private and public land conservation and land ethic in and around Murrysville (2011-2016)

Goal 7: Identify and protect important fields, forests, wetlands and stream corridors.

ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS

**Westmoreland Conservancy's Annual Meeting and Elections are scheduled for
Wednesday, April 27th, 2011.**

The regularly scheduled meeting for April 2011 will include the election of our Board of Governors.

This election is by our general membership, so **please plan to attend** if possible.

After the members elect the new governors, the governors will then elect the 2011 officers.

Remember – Annual Elections Meeting—**April 27th, 2011 at 7:30 pm** in the conference room next to the library.

THE DON HARRISON COMMUNITY TRAIL HIKE

The Don Harrison Community Trail is a six mile trail through central Murrysville. It is the result of 17 years of property acquisition and negotiation by the all volunteer **Westmoreland Conservancy**. It connects four conservancy reserves and two municipal land holdings. From east to west, the trail passes through the Walter Reserve into the Murrysville Community Park; from there through the Caywood Reserve which crosses Hills Church Road. Two right-of-ways cross Dominion and Shagbark properties to reach the King Reserve and cross Crowfoot Road into Potter's Corner to Sloan Elementary School. Once across Sloan School property and Sardis Road the trail makes use of various municipal holdings to reach Townsend Park at its westernmost end. It is not quite a greenway since it does cross three roads.

This First official Hike will be held on Saturday, June 18th and will start at 9am.

Participants may park in the parking lot at Townsend Park lower Pavilion and carpool to the Walter Reserve lot on Wiestertown Road if you plan to hike the entire length of the trail. Carpooling from the King or Caywood lots along the way will allow participants to terminate earlier. We recommend only hiking as far as is comfortable.

Wear sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing. Bring walking sticks, as there are some slopes to negotiate along the way.

See you at the Walter Reserve at 9 AM!

20TH ANNIVERSARY MEMBER PICNIC

SAVE THE DATE! 2011 marks the Westmoreland Conservancy's 20th Anniversary! Come celebrate with us Saturday, September 17th at a special Members' Picnic at Townsend Park. We are planning all kinds of fun, so put us on your calendar! There will be more information available in our July newsletter AND on our website as details come together.

NEWSLETTER NAME CONTEST

After some lively discussion the plan to change the name of our newsletter was tabled. That means that we can accept additional suggestions until mid-May and discuss the topic again at the 5/25 meeting. It might be interesting to know that many people like the name "Westmoreland Conservancy Newsletter". Let us know what you think!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT APRIL 2010 – APRIL 2011

I am very pleased to be able to report that great things are happening at Westmoreland Conservancy! A short overview will note tremendous work on the Don Harrison Community Trail, scheduled completion on the Caywood Reserve including the demolition of structures and construction of the parking area, and the progress regarding our accreditation preparation.

Westmoreland Conservancy partnered with Murrysville Trail Alliance (MTA) for the Discovery Walk program on our reserves and municipal parks which were scheduled April through September 2010. Our 2011 Hike Schedule is full of new and interesting things and is available on our website and in our newsletters.

Caching With The Conservancy (CWTC), our annual geocaching event, showed that no matter the weather we draw quite a crowd! Our 2010 event, held May 22nd, saw rain and periodic storms throughout the day and still had more than 80 participants. Murrysville Recreation and the Sportsmen and Landowners Alliance of Murrysville (SLAM) will be co-hosting our 2011 event, which will be held June 4th. It will take people to 6 of our reserves, 2 municipal locations and one private historic location.

I attended Rally 2010 in Hartford, CT October 1st - 5th and attended several workshops as well as the 3rd Board Member Summit. I also took a field trip to see the lands of the Redding Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy. Being able to compare methods and operations is immensely helpful! I'm looking forward to attending Rally 2011 in Milwaukee, WI, and hope that a few more of the board members might participate as well.

We secured a block grant from Westmoreland County for the demolition of structures on the Caywood Reserve. That job is recently completed and work will begin soon on the parking lot. We are currently gathering bids for the reserve sign for that location.

Westmoreland Conservancy has been effectively contending with an encroachment along the boundaries of one of our reserves and is looking forward to a resolution of the issue very soon.

The Don Harrison Community Trail (DHCT) is very near completion and the first official hike is scheduled for June 18th. The east/west trail begins on Wiestertown Rd. at the Walter Reserve, connects to Murrysville Community Park Valley Trail, passes through the Caywood Reserve, the Dominion and Shagbark Right-of-Way passages to the King Reserve, Potter's Corner, and onto Sloan School property. The trail across school property allows access to Murrysville Municipal Complex and the trail continues along to Townsend Park. This trail runs concurrently with several pre-existing Conservancy and Municipal trails and is marked with blazes and signs unique to DHCT.

Westmoreland Conservancy had been chosen in 2010 to participate in a pilot program to help prepare us for the accreditation process. We have completed the assessment process and are working hard to meet the recommendations set forth by our facilitators (E-Concepts). Our goal is to have everything in order and reviewed in time to register for accreditation by the end of 2011.

Thank you for all of your support. I am honored to be a part of the great work being done by this organization.

Shelly Tichy, 3/27/2011

FULL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



Please respond if attending an outing or event to:

wnewsletter@comcast.net



April 16: 10am. McGinnis Reserve - Orienteering Hike. Beginner Map & Compass skills. Bring compass and dress weather appropriate. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Will be canceled in the case of inclement weather. Leaders: Monika Dahlymple and Bruce Sundquist.

May 7: Crane Creek (Ohio) Spring Migration Excursion. Leave Murrysville at 3:30 AM. Contact Shelly Tichy at 724-325-5523 for travel information.

May 21: 10am. Walter Reserve - Orienteering Hike. Beginner Map & Compass skills. Bring compass and dress weather-appropriate. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Will be cancelled in the case of inclement weather. Leaders: Monika Dahlymple and Bruce Sundquist.

June 4: 8am. Townsend Park - Caching with the Conservancy. Bring GPS units and dress weather-appropriate. Rain or Shine.

June 18: 9am. First official hike along the Don Harrison Community Trail. Wear sturdy shoes and dress weather-appropriate. Rain or Shine.

July 16: 8pm. King Reserve - Twilight Hike. Bring flashlight and insect repellent; wear sturdy shoes and dress weather appropriate. Rain or Shine.

August 13: 9am Caywood Reserve - Nature Hike. Wear sturdy shoes and dress weather appropriate. Rain or Shine. Leader: Tom Pearson.

September 10: 9am. Tomer Reserve - Nature Hike. Wear sturdy shoes and dress weather appropriate. Rain or Shine. Leader: Sue Miller.

For more information regarding any Westmoreland Conservancy event, please visit our website at <http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org> or call 724-325-5523.

WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY ONLINE

Website: www.westmorelandconservancy.org

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/westmorelandconservancy/>

facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/fbwestmorelandconservancy>

Western PA Habitats, Landscapes, Inhabitants



Find the words in the grid. When finished, the unused letters will spell out a hidden message. Pick out the letters from left to right top line to bottom until you have solved the message.



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- AMPHIBIANS
- APPALACHIAN OAK PINE FORESTS
- BIRDS
- CAVES AND MINES
- CLIFFS
- CONIFER FORESTS
- FARMLANDS
- FISH
- FLOODPLAIN FORESTS

- GRASSLANDS
- INSECTS
- MAMMALS
- MARSH AND SHRUB WETLANDS
- MUSSELS
- PLATEAUS
- REPTILES
- SUBURBAN SPRAWL
- VERNAL POOLS



Westmoreland Conservancy

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contact@westmorelandconservancy.org

Board of Governors 2010

Officers:

President – Shelly Tichy
Vice President – Mark Emerson
Treasurer - Bjoerg Granger

Governors:

Mount Fitzpatrick
Julie Weaver
Cary Bohl
Alan Halperin
Richard Wagner
Bill Powers
Joanne Kendall
Dick Byers

The meetings are open, and we look forward to seeing you there. Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of each month at the Murrysville Library at 7:30 pm.

April 27th
May 25th
June 22nd



Westmoreland Conservancy

An all volunteer, non-profit, 501c-3 Corporation dedicated to acquiring and preserving rural and rustic lands for the public good.

Membership application

Westmoreland Conservancy
P.O. Box 446
Murrysville, PA 15668

Membership Levels

Individual.....\$15
Family.....\$20
Business membership.....\$40
Additional Donation.....\$_____

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State _____ Zip Code_____

e-mail_____

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