



WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

www.westmorelandconservancy.org

January 2006 Editor: Shelly Tichy (724) 325-5523
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2006 Annual Dinner

The 2006 Annual Dinner will be held Sunday, May 7th from 5-9 PM at The Willowbrook Country Club in Apollo. [Menu and reservation information are being made available via a separate insert in this issue of the newsletter.](#) Our guest and speaker for the evening will be James C. Finley, Associate Professor of Forest Resources at The Pennsylvania State University School of Forest Resources.



Reservations must be made by Friday, April 21st and are \$25/per person. The evening's menu will be your choice of Stuffed Pork Chop with mushroom sauce, Chicken Cordon Bleu or Scrod Florentine. All dinners include soup, salad, rolls, potato, vegetable, dessert and non-alcoholic beverage.

After our featured presentation we will award the door prize and the 50/50 raffle winner. Throughout the evening you will be able to participate in the Chinese-type auction of various prizes in which tickets are purchased for the desired item and then drawn to determine the winner. We will also hold a silent auction of items donated by local artisans and including the wildlife prints "*Great Horned Owl*" by Richard Evans Younger and "*Saw-Whet Owls*" by Don Whitlatch. The latter is numbered and signed. Both were generously donated to this event by Susan Dunbar.

Please fill out and return the enclosed Reservation form with your check before the April 21st deadline. And be ready for good food, interesting conversation and a great time!

2006 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Westmoreland Conservancy will be held April 26th at 7:30 pm in the Municipal Conference Room adjacent to the Library. It is very important that members be there to participate in the election of new Governors.

Donations for Silent Auction

We are looking for local artists and crafters to donate items to be auctioned at our Spring 2006 Annual Dinner. Birdhouses, feeders, flower arrangements, framed photos, paintings and artwork are welcome. All donations are tax deductible. Contact Joanne Kendall at hjkpittsburgh@alltel.net or Shelly Tichy at 724-325-5523 or at newsletter@westmorelandconservancy.org.

Wildlife Rehab Workshop

It's never the wrong time to think about the welfare of our wild neighbors. The Westmoreland Conservancy is sponsoring a workshop with Pamela Paulisick, a PA State licensed rehabilitator on Saturday, February 18th from 9:30 to 10:30 AM.

Do you know at what time a baby critter is in need of help and when he's actually being "kidnapped"? And did you know that many injured animals could be "rehabbed" and returned to their habitat? Pam will answer these questions and more. She runs Fawn Meadow Farm in Export and has agreed to take the helm for this workshop. Now we can all learn something about interacting with Nature. Please let us know if you plan to attend. Call Shelly at 724-325-5523 or e-mail: newsletter@westmorelandconservancy.org



Photo Shoot Outings

Within the Westmoreland Conservancy there is a band of intrepid photographers, eager to crawl over hill and dale in search of interesting things to capture on film or memory card. Even in the midst of winter there are breathtaking views and abundant activity to photograph. If you would be interested in joining us for one of our adventures, feel free to e-mail us at: contact@westmorelandconservancy.org.

Conserving Land in Pennsylvania

Dick Byers

On December 1, 2005, I attended a workshop at Donohoe Center sponsored by the Pennsylvania Land Trust Alliance (PALTA). The workshop was about conservation easements, a legal agreement whereby property owners can retain their land, but protect it from development in perpetuity.

The Westmoreland Conservancy Board of Governors had already decided not to get involved in conservation easements because of the requirement of monitoring the easement and enforcing the agreement. This is critical for the conservation of the property. Land trusts are among the few who will be policing such easements. If the future owners of the property do not comply with the law (the agreement), it could lead to expensive lawsuits to force them to comply, particularly if the easement agreement is not well written - and as we found out - many aren't. It was strongly emphasized that the best way to monitor and enforce conservation easements is to have a well written agreement to begin with, not easy to do because of the varying nature of properties and the conservation goals of the owners.

To encourage land conservation, but take out the risks involved in the monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements, PALTA has produced some model documents to guide the writing of these agreements. The conference began with some history and statistics, but most of the conference dwelled on these model documents. After a long 3-hour presentation with no breaks, I still believed it was worth attending, even with my lack of knowledge of the law and legal matters. Should our organization ever desire to conserve a piece of land, and an easement is the only way to go, this workshop removed some of the fear and risk of getting involved.

PALTA now consists of 72 conservation organizations and provides a \$5,000 grant to any of their member groups to help with the writing and transaction costs of easements. They also provide model documents for several types of easements. For example, there is a model for a Water Quality Improvement Easement designed primarily for water shed associations. There is an Agricultural Preservation Easement that allows land to always be available for farming. There is a Riparian Forest Buffer Protection Agreement for someone who just wants to protect the habitat along the borders of a stream. There are seven articles in this latter easement. Conserving the banks and habitat along a stream is tricky because the stream tends to erode and move its banks over time. The easement must be written so that if the stream moves, the buffer area moves with it by definition. This model provides guidance for writing that kind of agreement.

The general land conservation agreement model contains 8 articles and reflects the latest thinking and best practices. Article I concerns objectives. Articles II, III, and IV are on restrictions. Article V is on enforcement, VI on violations, VII on provisions and VIII on defined terms. Each of these is broken down further. Article 1.03, for example, covers specific objectives which could be water resources, forest and woodland resources, wildlife resources, scenic values or sustainable land uses. Article 1.07 is about beneficiaries. There is even an article on naming the document. Conservation easement means nothing to me. I prefer it be called a conservation land agreement. The owners can call it by any name that seems to fit.

The easements define three levels of protection. The highest protective level is to leave the land alone, no disturbances whatsoever. The standard level allows sustainable farming or forestry. The minimal level of protection seeks to promote compatible land use with a wide variety of activities. You can have all three levels on various areas of the same property. Anything permitted in the highest protection area is automatically allowed in the standard or minimal protection area and so on.

I couldn't take notes fast enough to report all the details under each of these articles, but the models seem to have all bases covered. These models were drawn up after considerable study of the faults of conservation easements already in existence and the drawbacks have, for the most part, been corrected

There are currently 53 easements in Westmoreland County. Statewide, there are 1434 easements covering 115, 815 acres in 56 counties. The PALTA representative emphasized that this is the time to think big. The Growing Greener Fund was passed last summer making millions of dollars available for conservation. There are people and politicians out there who do not want to see any land conserved at all. They would prefer to see it all developed. Consequently, PALTA urges conservancies to build positive relationships about what they are doing. PALTA also urges building public support with news releases about what local land trusts are doing. Try to befriend developers. There are right and wrong ways to develop. One of the handouts, for example, showed a 50 acre piece of property with two development plans. The conventional design used by most developers used all 50 acres for a housing project. The conservation design had the same number of houses, but conserved 32 of the 50 acres as permanent open space that could be used for recreation by the residents. Developers can be wary, but many find conservation designs a plus. They are cheaper to build, meaning more profit for the developer and less maintenance for the municipality. The 50 acre plan, for example, had 600 less feet of paved street under the conservation design.

All handouts, easement model documents and brochures picked up at the workshop have been turned over to the Board of Governors president Mount Fitzpatrick.

For landowners who want to see their property protected, but not necessarily open to the public, conservation easements are probably the way to go. More information will be available at the upcoming conference for conserving Pennsylvania land. The 2006 Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference will be held on April 28-29 at the Penn State Conference Center in State College, PA. Several of our members should attend, particularly anyone with conservation easement experience. Registration begins January 2 at <http://conserveland.org/conferences/2006/conf05ri>



Backyard Bird Count

On February 17-20, the Cornell University Great Backyard Bird Count will return for its 9th season. For those of you who are unfamiliar, this is a great opportunity to learn about native bird habitats in our own backyard and participate in a national study of bird populations. This year, they will be giving out awards to localities that submit the most checklists, record the greatest number of species or count the highest number of birds. No registration is required and during the three day event, you may bird watch for as little as 15 minutes or for as long as you would like. You may also keep count from public land as well as your own backyard. For information and instruction, visit <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/howTo.html> and follow the links at the top of the webpage to learn how to submit and view results. We hope you all participate in this fun and educational activity.

WHAT IS WILDLIFE REHABILITATION??

Pamela Paulisick, Pa State Licensed Rehabilitator

**WILDLIFE IS THE EMBODIMENT OF ALL THE ELEMENTS WHICH COEXIST WITH MAN IN A CONTINUING CYCLE OF RESPECT. OBSERVE THE WONDERS OF NATURE AND FEEL JOY KNOWING THAT WE'RE ALL A PART OF A GLORIOUS PATTERN OF LIFE.
HONOR IT.**

Do you ever wonder what happens to the babies of those animals you see hit on the side of the road, or the bird who hit's the window of your home and lies limp on the ground, animals whose mom abandons them for one reason or another, or animals who are displaced due to environmental or growing populations?? When people find wild animals whose life is threatened, these found "babies" are brought to a wildlife rehabilitator to help. Wildlife rehabilitation is the process of rescuing, raising, and high quality care for wild animals that have been injured by cars or people, orphaned because mom died or sick due to parasites and disease, with the ultimate goal of returning them back to the wild.

For rehabilitation to be deemed successful, these released animals must be able to truly function as wild animals, which would include but not limited to, recognizing and obtaining appropriate foods, selecting mates of their own kind, reproduction and show an appropriate fear of potential dangers such as cars, people, dogs etc.

Wildlife rehabilitators are trained, skilled and state permitted by the PA Game Commission to provide the specialized care it takes to help these wild creatures become wild again. Releasing these wild babies back to their 'birthright' of freedom takes a lot more than compassion. Caring for these animals is very different than caring for your dog or cat. They need special diets, feeding, administering meds, vaccinations, cleaning and, building, if necessary, the required caging, and finding suitable release sites for each species that you do. We

are trained to assess if the animal truly needs rescued as well as safely capturing, handling and transporting these babies. Much time is spent on food prep, feeding, cleaning, transporting to vets and paperwork, paperwork, and more paperwork!! Some of these mammals need fed as much as six (6) times a day, while songbirds are fed every fifteen (15) minutes for a twelve (12) hour day. Some wildlife spends as much as five (5) months (raccoons) in our care. It can be a very demanding activity from mid March until late October. We work 24/7, which includes weekends and holidays.

Determination of care is assessed by the rehabilitator and their sponsoring vet, as to growth, diet and preparing for eventual release back to the wild. We work with many professionals, including biologists, game commission officials, veterinarians, and nuisance control people. We all work together to avoid or alleviate many of the problems that occur when people and wildlife come into contact. People call not only about injured or orphaned wildlife but also with questions and problems that they may be having with wildlife in their houses or yards. We can advise callers of ways of dealing with their wild neighbors humanely, whether they have squirrels in their attics or robins nesting on their porches. Some animals will need our help and other calls can be resolved over the phone. In this way we also can help educate the public about their fears or misconceptions, encourage appreciation, and respect of wildlife and nature.

People may be attracted to wildlife rehabilitation because it sounds so rewarding, enjoyable and exciting. It can be all of those things. However, it is also difficult, stressful, tiring and at times frustrating. It takes a lot of commitment of time and energy as well as space for properly raising these animals. We know when, how and where to release wildlife, and have the necessary permits (state and federal) to temporarily possess and care for these babies. It also takes money... we do not get paid or reimbursed for our services or expenses by the state or federal government. Rehabilitation is not about "cuddling" wildlife or keeping them as pets, but keeping them wild. It's about releasing those wild animals that can recover, while also recognizing that some will die and some must be euthanized. Your reward for hundreds of hours of work is the release of an animal back to the wild.....the moment an owl takes flight, or an opossum runs away from you, is when you know you've been successful and your heart has been rewarded 10 fold.....

It is, overall, the joy of seeing an animal return to its natural habitat, healthy and wild again.

Westmoreland Conservancy

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

contact@westmorelandconservancy.org



Schedule of Upcoming Events

Wednesday, January 26: Conservancy Meeting

February 17-20: Backyard Bird Count

Saturday, February 18: Wildlife Rehab Workshop with Pam Paulisick (licensed rehabilitator) at Municipal Room in Library Complex 9:30 AM. Contact Shelly at newsletter@westmorelandconservancy.org or 724-325-5523 to reserve a seat. Free!

Wednesday, February 22: Conservancy Meeting

Wednesday, March 23: Conservancy Meeting



2005 Board of Governors/Officers

Officers: President – Mount Fitzpatrick

Vice President – Shelly Tichy

Secretary – Doug Bauman

Treasurer - Bjorg Granger

Governors: Dick Byers, Doug Bauman, Charlie Conway, Theo van de Venne, Don Harrison, Richard Wagner, Cary Bohl, Katie Blackmore, Hank Kendall

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.

January 25th

February 22nd

March 23rd

The next Newsletter is scheduled for **April 2006**.



Westmoreland Conservancy

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



Westmoreland Conservancy

Membership Application

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

Membership Levels

Individual.....\$15.00

Family.....20.00

Business membership.....40.00

Additional Donation.....\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

e-mail _____

For your convenience, you may also renew your membership or give donations through our website at www.westmorelandconservancy.org

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ECO-FUN PAGE

Food Batteries

Meant for at least Grade 7-9 (age 11-13).

This experiment is edible.

An adult should be present.

Overview:

Create a battery from common foodstuffs, sufficient to light a small lightbulb, LED or LCD display.

Equipment:

1. One large potato or lemon.
2. **Zinc electrode** - a 3cm x 0.5cm piece of zinc metal will suffice. You can inquire at a local hardware store.
3. **Copper electrode** - Similarly sized piece of copper metal.

4. **Copper wire** - Sufficient length of wire to create a circuit from the zinc electrode to a lightbulb (or other device) and copper electrode.
5. Small lightbulb - flashlight or penlight bulbs work best. You can experiment with other devices such as LED displays, or time pieces.

Safety:

If no copper electrode is used, hydrogen gas is given off as a byproduct of the reactions taking place. Be wary of performing the experiment near heat sources or an open flame.

Though the voltages and amperages given off are low, care should be taken in handling the wire and other parts of the circuit.

How to do the experiment:

1. Stick your zinc electrode all the way into the potato or lemon.
2. Place the copper electrode on the opposite side.
3. Connect the small lightbulb to the two electrodes with copper wire.
4. Observe what happens!

Groundhog/Woodchuck

Groundhog is another name for Woodchuck. This rodent is a type of marmot. These solitary mammals [hibernate](#) (sleep through winter) in burrows. Groundhogs are found in North America in forests and fields.

Anatomy: A groundhog grows up to 17 inches (43 cm) long. It has a tail that is about 5 inches (13 cm) long. This [mammal](#) has a bulky body and short limbs. The fur is brown-gray and the eyes are black. The hands and feet are black and have sharp, sturdy claws. Like all rodents, their incisor teeth continue to grow throughout their entire life.

Diet: Groundhogs/woodchucks are mostly herbivores (plant-eaters). They eat grass, seeds, leaves, flowers, fruit, eggs, and some insects.

Predators: Groundhogs/woodchucks are hunted by many animals, including [wolves](#), dogs, [coyotes](#), [bobcats](#), [foxes](#), and humans. Groundhogs cannot move very quickly, so their best defense is to retreat into their burrows. Keen eyesight and hearing help warn groundhogs of predators approaching.

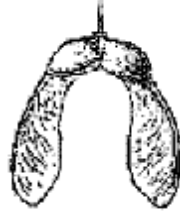
Classification: Class Mammalia (mammals), Order Rodentia (rodents), Family Sciuridae (ground squirrels), Genus Marmota (marmots), species *M. monax*.



In Your Own Backyard

Find 9 different kinds of Discoveries in your Backyard. For example, a mammal, a bird, an amphibian, a fish, an insect, a reptile, a mushroom, a worm and a tree. Send your list to The **Westmoreland Conservancy, Box 446, Murrysville, PA 15668** to be published in an upcoming edition of our newsletter. Be sure your name and age is included.

Can you identify this seed?



ANIMAL BABIES



Circle words vertically, horizontally or diagonally

L Y B J T E L G I P F T X K D T
 W C Y G N E T T M J Y Q C N E C
 C O D Z H R L G C K K I Q R R G
 O G R D N F O N G O H I E M F O
 S O V R L C C I N C C V T A L S
 S W J A A B G L I R E K W T R L
 E I C K T F N H L L T N R W E I
 T L N L A P I C G L P U P E Y N
 W L W M O O L T D L A O F B L G
 H O B V H U K A E P U L L E T L
 E P T K S L C H L P U G G L E Y
 L B D N I T U C F T A D P O L E
 P C A L A D D U M K J Z J Q M M
 Q X H U A F T B I H C O Y Y Z L
 A I R C Q M N T Z T E R R L L K
 L R P L W S B I P Y X F M L X F

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calf	farrow	kid	pullet
chick	fawn	kit	pup
cockrell	fledgling	kitten	shoat
colt	foal	lamb	squab
cosset	fry	leveret	tadpole
cria	gosling	piglet	whelp
cub	hatchling	polliwog	
cygnet	infant	poult	
duckling	joey	puggle	



