



# WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

[www.westmorelandconservancy.org](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org)

January 2010 Editors: Shelly Tichy & Kate Blackmore (724) 325-5523 [wcnewsletter@comcast.net](mailto:wcnewsletter@comcast.net)

## Mayor's Community Service Award

Westmoreland Conservancy was chosen to receive the 2009 Murrysville "Mayor's Community Service Award".



The presentation took place Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Joyce Somers recounted the history of the Westmoreland Conservancy and the growth experienced since 1991. It was my honor to be able to

accept this award on behalf of the Westmoreland Conservancy and reiterate our dedication to preserving wildlife habitat and providing open green space and trails for the enjoyment of the residents and visitors of Murrysville. It was great having so many members present for the award presentation. It was even better to have so many stay and attend our December meeting. We hope to see you at one soon!

*Shelly Tichy*

Mayor Somer's address:

I am pleased to award the 2009 Mayor's Community Service Award to the Westmoreland Conservancy. Founded in 1991 by volunteers in Murrysville, the Westmoreland Conservancy is an all-volunteer, non-profit, 501c-3 Corporation dedicated to acquiring rural and rustic lands



for the preservation and conservation of land, wildlife and habitat. The Conservancy has been instrumental in preserving approximately 300 acres of open space for our enjoyment and the enjoyment of future generations.

Through gifts, grants, and in cooperation with the Municipality, their first acquisition was the Kellman property, which is now apart of the Municipal Parks system. Since that first venture in 1991, the Conservancy has added an additional 250 acres of conservation lands by acquiring the King, Walter, Tomer, Flinn, McGinnis, Potter's Corner and Caywood Reserves. These reserves are owned and maintained by the Conservancy, and more than 100 acres of this land was acquired through direct gifts!

All seven of these reserves contain minimally invasive trails and are open to the public for the enjoyment of nature and passive recreational uses such as hiking, photography, or geocaching.

The Conservancy is currently negotiating a right-of-way with Dominion Gas in order to connect a trail from the Walter Reserve on Wiestertown Road, through Murrysville Community Park, the Caywood Reserve, the Shagbark development, the King Reserve, exiting on Crowfoot Road. They envision that trail to eventually extend all the way to Townsend Park, effectively traversing Murrysville from west to east.

For their dedication to the natural preservation of lands and open space for us and future generations, I am happy to present the 2009 Mayor's Community Service Award to the many hard-working volunteers who make up the organization known as the Westmoreland Conservancy. I also wish you success in your future endeavors!

Joyce K. Somers, Mayor  
Municipality of Murrysville  
December 2009



From left, back row: Mark Emerson, Richard Wagner, Sandy Knepper, Bill Byers, Dick Byers, Don Harrison, Cary Bohl, Bill Powers, Jean Noble, Larry Noble, Julie Weaver, Ron Weaver.

Front row: Clarence Skena, Betsy Aiken, Joanne Kendall, Geri Mitchell, Shelly Tichy, Katie Blackmore, Bjoerg Granger, Mount Fitzpatrick, Monika Dahlrymple, Mary Jane Seipler, Tracee Imai, KarenLee Kreger, Rich Pukal.

## RALLY 2009: Portland, Oregon

*By: Katie Blackmore*

Portland is situated on the northern Oregon border, 70 miles east of the Pacific Ocean and straddling the Willamette River. A city about the same size as Pittsburgh, it has the same comfortable feel and walking capability. In fact, walking, bicycles and the extensive Max Rail system are the primary forms of transportation with very little auto traffic. Westmoreland Conservancy

president Shelly Tichy and I attended the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Rally 2009, held here in October.

Shelly & I found it to be a very green city, one of the main reasons it was chosen for Rally this year. There is an absence of litter, I'm sure helped by the fact that there were many 3- section trash/recyclable bins everywhere that were actually used! Even the homeless folks, of which there seemed to be more than a few, were tidy. Old town was interesting, but mostly shut down, although a large section of it hosts a March-thru-November weekend-only flea market.

Portland is favored with a mild climate, so much so that I observed Camellia and Nandina growing profusely. We were fortunate to venture out there just before the six month rainy season, which they affectionately term "the drips". Apparently that what it does from October thru March...just drizzle.

My personal highlight, of course, was the Mt. Hood & Columbia River Gorge Field Trip, hosted by the well informed folks from the Columbia Land



Trust on Sunday, October 11th. Our route took us up the Columbia River Highway, paralleling the scenic Gorge of the same name. We slowly climbed, stopping frequently to take in a few of the many stunning waterfalls and overlooks along the way. A lunch stop at a pizza brew house prepared us for the final climb to the volcanic Mt. Hood. Depression-era Timberline Lodge greeted us at 6000 ft. It is an architectural marvel of wood and rock craftsmanship rarely seen today, and built with recycled building materials. A short chair lift ride took us closer to the top where the view was splendid.

The following three days were spent at The Oregon Convention Center, a hugely efficient building (once we found our way around). Shelly and I took various seminars and workshops. Shelly focused on fund raising and administration while I preferred flora and fauna. The font of information gleaned from these sessions will be discussed at future meetings and implemented from then on. It was



amazing to discover that no matter what part of the country one resides, questions and concerns are basically

the same... just different terrain. The key words of the next decade will be conservation, biodiversity and sustainability. All key to our survival.

What I personally took away from this experience was the knowledge that together we can make a huge and positive difference. There are many committed people out

there just waiting for help to save as much of this ecologically rich planet as possible during our lifetime.

## Autumn Geocache Event October 24, 2009

*By: Tracee Imai*

Geocaching is a fun-filled, family friendly sport with participants from all over the world. 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). Other adventurers download these coordinates to a GPS and seek out these unique, fascinating or beautiful places. Once the geocache is found, an entry is made in the onsite 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.

Geocaching is a flexible sport that it is enjoyed by families, groups or as an individual. There are no special skills involved and anyone enjoy the sport. There are geocachers who started at the age of one day and others who have reached the century mark. There are many caches that require little to no hiking and others that take you along trails that stretch for miles.



On October 24, 2009, the Westmoreland Conservancy hosted a geocaching event and picnic. This spectacular affair showcased the Westmoreland Conservancy's reserves, including its newest acquisition, Caywood. Temporary geocaches were hidden at each one of the Conservancy's reserves (Tomer, Walter, McGinnis, Caywood, Potter, and King). Most of these geocaches were traditional styled caches in which the coordinates to the geocache's location are provided. However, the geocaches located on Potter and Caywood were a little different. Potter's geocache was a puzzle style designed to not only bring people onto the reserve but also to experience the "tree" trail available there. In order to obtain the coordinates to the final location, crafty geocachers utilized information in the tree trail booklet to decipher the tree puzzle. Caywood's geocache was a multi-stage cache. The provided coordinates brought geocachers to the first stage where the coordinates for the next stage were hidden. This series of four stages brought geocachers on a tour of the Caywood property and the brand-new trail system. With each successful geocache find that day, the intrepid geocacher was rewarded with a collectible Westmoreland Conservancy card unique to the reserve on which it was hidden.

New and experienced geocachers from all over the country flocked to Murrysville to participate in the fun-filled adventure. Throughout the day, people hiked along the



myriad of wonderful trails, examined the beautiful flora, listened to the birds calling, and even spotted an animal track or two. Many geocachers even found the time to pay a visit to some of the other parks in Murrysville, such as the Wetlands, Duff Park and Townsend Park.



As the sky darkened and the wind began to blow more coldly, everyone descended on Townsend Park for a well-deserved break, some

delicious food and "cache talk". Here, people filled their plates and their souls with great food and better companionship. Even new cachers had a story to share about this day's exploits!

The fun-filled day culminated when Conservancy president Shelly Tichy raffled off some wonderful prizes. These prizes were donated by local businesses, fellow geocachers and by Shelly. One sought-after prize was the geocoins generously donated by participants who came all the way from Sacramento, California! Our thanks to Monster Golf, CiCi's Pizza and Moio's of Monroeville, The Hofbrauhaus at SouthSide Works, The Spaghetti & Steak House and the Lamplighter, Dairy Queen, Five Guys and Hoss's for their generous donations and support of this event.

Of course, one successful geocaching event is just an incentive to have another. On Saturday, May 22, 2010 the Conservancy will partner with the Municipality of Murrysville to host another fun-filled geocaching event. Mark it on your calendars and we'll see you then!

### Our Next Geocache Event

As mentioned above, plans for the Spring 2010 Geocache Event are already in the making. We are joining forces with the Murrysville Recreation Department and creating an all-day family event. We will have our usual geocaching format at the Conservancy Reserves while adding a timed contest at Townsend Park. There will also be instruction for anyone wanting to learn about geocaching! There will be activities at Townsend Park all day and there will be a hot dog vendor on site. Look for more information in *The Nutshell*, on our website and in our April newsletter.

### Social Networking

#### with Westmoreland Conservancy

You are invited to join us on Facebook and Flickr. We're putting ourselves out there, increasing our visibility and telling everyone all about our events and projects. There are links to the Westmoreland Conservancy website as well as to Flickr! Stay up-to-date with our activities and events at: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=104477069348&ref=ts>

Share your photos of our reserves and events at: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/westmorelandconservancy/>

### Westmoreland Conservancy Website New Wildlife Webcam

There is a new feature on our website! You will notice we have a live wildlife webcam being broadcast from the woods of Murrysville. The webcam is broadcast 24/7 streaming live video with sound. You will be able to see much of the rich wildlife our community has to offer such as whitetail deer, wild turkey, raccoons, red/gray fox, owls, hawks, squirrels, song birds, and much more. The webcam features 5 cameras: one main camera, and 4 motion-activated cameras. The motion-activated cameras are setup in remote areas and will automatically be switched on when animals move in front of them.



We have been seeing a Great-Horned Owl and Red Fox on one of the remote cameras in the evenings. The main camera is busy with activity all day long. In the morning and afternoons there is a flock of wild turkey which show up fairly regularly, and the evenings there are typically whitetail deer and raccoons.

We hope you enjoy this addition to our website and will visit often. This is something for the whole family to enjoy.

### 2009 Board of Governors/Officers

- Officers:** President – Shelly Tichy  
 Vice President – Katie Blackmore  
 Secretary – Mark Emerson  
 Treasurer - Bjoerg Granger
- Governors:** Mount Fitzpatrick, Doug Bauman, Cary Bohl, Charles Conway, Bill Powers, Joanne Kendall, Richard Wagner

The meetings are open, and we look forward to seeing you there. Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of each month the conference room (formerly the Tax Office) on the left as you come in the Library entrance at 7:30 pm.

**January 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**February 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**March 24<sup>th</sup>**

The next Newsletter is scheduled for **April 2010**

### April 2010 Elections Meeting

Our regularly scheduled April 2010 meeting will include the election of our board of governors. This election is by the general membership, so please attend if you can. After the general membership elects the new governors, the governors will then elect the 2010 officers.

Remember - Annual Elections Meeting on April 28, 2010 at 7:30 pm, in the conference room (formerly the Tax Office) on the left as you come in the Library entrance.

### 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

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

[contact@westmorelandconservancy.org](mailto:contact@westmorelandconservancy.org)



### Schedule of Upcoming Events



Please respond if attending an outing to:

[wnewsletter@comcast.net](mailto:wnewsletter@comcast.net)

**Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Municipal Room (formerly the Tax Office) on the left as you come in the Library entrance.

**Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Municipal Room

**Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup>:** Winter walk at the Walter Reserve. Meet at the parking area on Wiestertown Road at 9:30 AM.

**Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Municipal Room.

**Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>:** Annual Elections/Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Municipal Room.



### 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](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org)**