



WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

www.westmorelandconservancy.org

July 2005 Editor: Shelly Tichy (724) 325-
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2005 Annual Dinner

President Mount Fitzpatrick opened the 2005 Westmoreland Conservancy Dinner with a warm welcome to all and noted each new face with a personalized anecdote. The dinner was held Sunday, May 22nd at the Grand View Restaurant overlooking the Monongahela River in North Braddock.

Guest speaker for the evening was our very own Dick Byers, author of the Conservancy Corner articles and book collections. His topic was "Animal Adaptations". His slide presentation illustrated various examples of natural camouflage, mimicry and genetic adaptation.

The room was decorated with a "Nature" theme. Our roving band of photo enthusiasts collected photos



for a display depicting Spring, wildlife and phases of bird and plant development. There were more

photos on easels arranged on various tables around the room. Plumline Nursery generously donated White Ash and Japanese Snowbell saplings for the centerpieces. To these we added Norway Spruce from Musser Forests and potted Cosmos brought color to the groupings.

Raffle tickets were sold throughout the evening for the chance to win some great gifts. The winners were drawn after our featured presentation. Various businesses and individuals in our vicinity were wonderfully generous by donating gifts and services for this special evening. Thank you to Georgianna and The Buttercup for the floral arrangement, which was won by Kathe Cassol. Betts Morton was the lucky individual who won the gift bag filled with \$137.00 in gift restaurant certificates. The bag contained a gift card to The Boulevard, which was donated by Dr. Kevin Edwards. Certificates from Fox's Pizza of Delmont, Dunkin' Donuts, Pasqualina's and Jennuine Cafe of Murrysville and Lavender Hill of Penn Hills rounded out the collection. The third prize raffled was a basket of 5 assorted wines. Thanks to Flowers in the Attic at Lavender Hill for wrapping the gift bag and basket, and for providing the floral foil to wrap the plants. They were beautifully wrapped and received a lot of attention. The surprise came when the winning number was drawn for the wine. The wait staff had been absolutely wonderful all evening and had pooled their cash to buy some tickets. Guess who won!!!

Many thanks to the members of the committee who helped make the evening a memorable event.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Westmoreland Conservancy was held April 27th, 2005. At this time, Hank Kendall and Cary Bohl were elected as first term Governors and Dick Byers was re-elected for a second consecutive term. New officers were elected upon opening the Governors' meeting. Officers for 2005 are: President: Mount Fitzpatrick; Vice-President: Shelly Tichy; Secretary: Doug Bauman; Treasurer: Cindy McCormick until August.

The Westmoreland Conservancy Needs A Treasurer

Do you enjoy working with numbers? Things like balancing accounts and writing checks. Or just making sure financial things are kept in order. Maybe you are a CPA with a little extra time. If that's the case, we would like to hear from you. For nearly as long as the Westmoreland Conservancy has been in existence, Joe & Cindy Werns have done a superb job of keeping our books in order. They have been tireless in their service to the Conservancy, but eventually other priorities in their lives demanded their attention. Nonetheless, the Werns will be there to help guide their successor through the reporting requirements of a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3). Please contact Mount Fitzpatrick at 724-327-6517.

Community Day 2005

Murrysville Community Day 2005 will be held Saturday, September 10 at the Public Works Complex. We will be in the same location as last year and are planning another great presentation, so don't miss us! Watch the Penn Franklin and the website for updates.

Gifford Pinchot

An Official for the Public Good

1865-1946

“the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run”

By Jan Fitzpatrick

Ever wonder where the term “conservation” originated? It was applied by President Theodore Roosevelt and his chief of the USDA Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, to the concept that our natural resources must be preserved for the public good. The need to protect America’s forests from reckless exploitation at the beginning of the twentieth century resulted in a movement whose mission today is no less important than it was one hundred years ago when oil, lumber, and mineral barons pillaged the land for the profit of a few.

As America’s first forester, Pinchot applied scientific land management strategies, such as selective harvesting, to the 200 million acres of national forest under his jurisdiction from 1898 to 1910. Political aspirations and interest in social reform took Pinchot out of the woods and onto the city streets as he worked to regulate child labor, give women the right to vote, support prohibition, recognize labor unions and tackle other controversial issues in both the Progressive and Republican Parties.

In 1914, Pinchot lost his bid for a Senate seat but married Cornelia Bryce, a fellow crusader for social justice who shared his ideology. Both enjoyed the support of wealthy families and were able to devote their time to reform via political involvement. Focusing on the more popularly supported issues – i.e., regulation of utilities, reorganization of the government and growing the economy – Pinchot was elected Governor of Pennsylvania in 1922.

During his first term, Pinchot streamlined the state government, introduced a pension system, and attempted to regulate the electric utilities. The last effort met with defeat, being undermined by the utility lobbyists and two strikes by anthracite coal miners. Following a four year leave, Pinchot was elected to a second term in 1930 and initiated a series of economic recovery programs to benefit Pennsylvanians affected by the Depression. A notable accomplishment was the paving of 20,000 miles of roadway to enable farmers access to more distant markets. The use of machinery was limited in order to hire more of the unemployed. The first “Pinchot Road” (now PA 177) crosses Gifford Pinchot State Park in York County.

After a lifetime of work for political and social reform and the management of our natural resources, Pinchot died of leukemia at age 81. His Grey Towers estate, located in the Pocono mountains, was donated to the USDA Forest Service and is used by many conservation groups, including the Pinchot Institute for Conservation.

Learn more about the father of America’s conservation movement at: www.pinchot.org

Visit Grey Towers: www.fs.fed.us/gt/index.shtml

Keep up-to-date on the Bush Administration’s efforts to open roadless portions of our National Forests for “resource extraction” at: www.gptaskforce.org

McGinnis Reserve Park Chat Walk

Thirteen enthusiastic walkers joined Mount Fitzpatrick and his wife, Jan, for a two-hour walk at the McGinnis Nature Reserve on May 18th. Using the new informative brochure and laminated samples of fern, participants were able to identify a variety of flora, including Fire Pink, Celandine, Black Cohosh, several ferns and lichens, and the Devil’s Walking Stick. Anecdotes on the area’s history were shared

among the walkers. The next walk co-sponsored by the Conservancy will occur at King Nature Reserve on July 20th at 8:30 AM, rain or shine.

Rotary Works at King Reserve

Wednesday June 8th was the Rotary Club Clean-up Day at the King Reserve. Mount Fitzpatrick, Theo van de Venne and Richard Wagner



accompanied the Rotary Volunteers, directing them to areas in need of maintenance. The groups worked under conditions of extreme heat and high humidity, and should feel very good about their accomplishments. They used weed whackers to clear areas around the old stone foundation and the gas line right-of-way, making visible headway in a few locations.

When the work party wrapped up, the real party began! Mount, Theo and Richard were invited to join the picnic/pool party at Ben Getty's house, where they chased off the heat with cool drinks, good food and good company.

A Helping Hand for Wildlife

How many are aware that there is a licensed wildlife rehab/sanctuary nearby? 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? Pamela Paulisick of Fawn Meadow Farm in Export has agreed to write an occasional article for the newsletter, possibly hold a workshop next Spring, and perhaps teach us all something about interacting with Nature. Watch for more in future newsletters.

ANNUAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

April, 2004 - April, 2005

In April, 2004, the outgoing president, Cary Bohl, described the initial efforts to save Pleasant Valley Park from sale by the Municipality of Murrysville. Much effort has since been devoted to this project. Community support was obtained by involving other organizations: SLAM (Sportsmen and Landowners Alliance of Murrysville), FORM (Friends of Rural Murrysville), EAC (Environmental Advisory Council), scouting and interested individuals. This resulted in the formation of an ad hoc group, the "PVPark Volunteers," which meets monthly to inform and to plan strategy.

Speakers at public sessions of Council spoke on the necessity for open space; the benefits accruing from reduced infrastructure costs and school taxes; for the opportunities for all age groups to engage in passive recreation as hiking, biking, sledding and cross country skiing. Petitions were generated and editorial letters were published by the local newspapers, all of which culminated in Murrysville Council's decision to retain Pleasant Valley Park for the benefit of our local citizens.

Ongoing efforts are now directed to constructing a parking area exiting from Pleasant Valley Road and to the creation of hiking/biking trails.

The guest speaker at the Conservancy's annual dinner was Dr. Walter Carson from the University of Pittsburgh. His presentation of forest habitat destruction resulting from grazing by an overabundance of deer was thought provoking and well received.

It is interesting to note that four deer exclosures have now been installed on Conservancy property by Tim Forrester of Scout Troop 208 as part of his requirements for the Eagle Scout rank. These exclosures are seven feet high and have a footprint measuring 15' x 25'. A similarly sized adjacent control area has been delineated using white stakes. Plant surveys have been recorded in all the areas. Dr. Carson provided input in the design, Dick Byers provided Conservancy oversight, and both will also monitor the results of plant surveys in ensuing years.

In December, 2004, the Murrysville Municipal Council proposed a rezoning of properties which would have placed Conservancy properties in a new "Public Lands" district. As details were clarified, it became evident that restrictions placed on Public Land properties would have seriously affected the operation of the Conservancy in Murrysville. Members petitioned Council, wrote letters to the local papers expressing concern and made presentations at Council meetings, such that in March, 2005, Council reversed the proposal for Conservancy properties. The zoning then reverted back to the zoning at the time of the property acquisition.

Scott Ackman of Scout Troop 206 completed his Eagle Scout project by designing and constructing a 20' long by 4' wide pedestrian bridge over Pearson's Creek. This bridge provides access to the King and Potter Reserves on the south side of the creek and also provides for use by the Sloan School students of Tom Pearson.

The design was excellent (including balusters), was low in cost and was expertly installed by the scouts as directed by Scott. It should be noted that the design considered flooding events and that the bridge survived the September floods.

Four of the summertime "Park Chat Walks" were sponsored by the Conservancy and were well received by the 12-15 attendees. A new enhancement to the walks were the tri-fold hand outs prepared by Jan Fitzpatrick which included some history of the Conservancy property and also interesting items of flora (with sketches) to be found on the property at that time of year. Have you ever tasted an edible paw-paw fruit? The opportunity to do so occurred during the walk in the Walter Reserve.

New efforts to involve the public in the natural outdoor world have been initiated by Conservancy members. Doug Bauman organized our first Snowy Scavenger Hunt. With the active participation of the weatherman (snow on the ground) and several members, attendees enjoyed an afternoon walk in the woods identifying listed flora and fauna, or simply seeing how quickly they could hike the snowy trail.

Dick Byers initiated a backyard biodiversity contest to include the seasons of spring, summer and fall. Check your April, 2005, newsletter for details.

The newsletter has added an "Eco-Fun for Kids" page developed by Jan Fitzpatrick (try those interesting experiments) and a "Word Search" puzzle page by Shelly Tichy suitable for all ages.

Dick Byers completed Volume II of the "Conservancy Collection," while Cary Bohl arranged for the printing. The two volumes are a superb reading treat for all those who are interested in the natural world.

The Conservancy continued its participation in the Murrysville Community Day and also staffed a booth at the Fort Hand Festival in Washington Township.

In April, 2005, a good friend of the Conservancy, Jane Caywood, died as a result of complications encountered during surgery. She and her family have gifted an elegant piece of property to the Conservancy, and they have also directed memorial donations to the benefit of the Conservancy. Much remains to be done before a formal dedication ceremony is scheduled, but their generosity will always be recognized as the "Caywood Nature Reserve."

All told, it has been an exceptionally busy and rewarding year for the Conservancy. Yet, it would not have been possible without your continuing active support! Thank you!

Mount Fitzpatrick, President

Pleasant Valley Park Entrance & Parking

The PVPark Volunteers witnessed a large step forward with the in-stallation of a 20-car parking area and entrance. The work began June 14th and some of the Volunteers spent June 18th seeding and mulching the surrounding area. Trail plans will be submitted to the appropriate committees and upon approval will be the next job tackled.



Westmoreland Conservancy

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

contact@westmorelandconservancy.org

Schedule of Upcoming Events

Wednesday, July 20th - Park Chat Walk at the King Nature Reserve
8:30 am. Meet at the King parking lot on Crowfoot Rd. Rain or Shine

Saturday, July 23rd -Nature Walk/Tree Identification w/Dick Byers
9 am. Meeting spot: Duff Park.

Saturday, August 13th - Summer Picnic 2005 at Sardis Park with
F.O.R.M. PV Park Volunteers & S.L.A.M.
3pm - bonfire. Adults \$7.00, Kids eat free.
Includes all you can eat Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Kielbassi, Soda.
[See insert for details.](#)

Saturday, September 10 - Murrysville Community Day (Main Event).
Public Works Complex, noon to 6 pm.

2005 Board of Governors/Officers

Officers: President - Mount Fitzpatrick

Vice President - Shelly Tichy

Secretary - Doug Bauman

Treasurer - Cindy McCormick

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

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.

July 27th

August 24th

September 28th

The next Newsletter is scheduled for October 1st.

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Searching For A New Home

We are in need of a new storage area for our display boards,
books and materials that are used for such events as Community
Day and the like. Please call Mount Fitzpatrick at 724-327-6517
if you think you could help us with storage.

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.....\$10.00

Family.....15.00

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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