



## WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

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

July 2007 Editor: Shelly Tichy (724) 325-5523 [newsletter@westmorelandconservancy.org](mailto:newsletter@westmorelandconservancy.org)

[.....jump to activities page.....](#)

### 2007 Annual Meeting

The Annual Members Meeting and Elections of the Westmoreland Conservancy was held **April 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm** in the Municipal Conference Room adjacent to the Library. Mount Fitzpatrick, Shelly Tichy and Richard Wagner had all served the maximum 6 years as Governors and therefore stepped down. With other vacancies, there were several openings to fill. Members elected Betsy Aiken, Katie Blackmore, Charles Conway and Maury Hanes. Following the election of Governors, Officers were nominated and elected. The 2007 Officers are: Mark Emerson, President; Betsy Aiken, Vice President; Joanne Kendall, Secretary and Bjoerg Granger, Treasurer. Thank you to those attending.

### Spring Migration Road Trip

The Spring Migration trip to Crane Creek on Saturday, May 12 was memorable! There were a couple of new faces this year as Cary Bohl and Louise Burkey joined Richard Wagner and myself at 3 AM Saturday morning. With a couple of stops along the way we made it to Crane Creek around 8 AM. There were also hundreds of birders from all over. Known as one of the premier birdwatching areas in the country, it is not unusual to see dozens of species in the course of a day. Swallows delight the eye all summer long, while ducks, geese, coots and egrets are easily sighted in their natural habitat. This female woodcock was a great find, as these birds are usually very reclusive.

There was a Raptor Rescue tent set up at the Visitor's Center, with many rescued birds on display. All donations are used for the rehabilitation of sick and/or injured raptors, from the smallest Kestrel to the larger eagles and owls. The vast majority are returned to the wild, but those that cannot survive in their natural habitat are trained as educational ambassadors.

On the way home we stopped in Akron to see the goings-on at a blue heron rookery. In an area as large as 2 city-blocks there were in excess of 150 active nests. What a sight! The babies were visible and we were able to observe the little ritual between the adults as one would bring in food and get permission from the guardian adult to enter the nest. What a great day!

### Members' Picnic

The Westmoreland Conservancy has scheduled a picnic for our members and their families for **Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 3 PM – 7 PM. At Pedora Park** (Old William Penn Hwy at Wilson Rd, Export). There is a playground for children's activities, so bring the family! We'll have a pot-luck style picnic in the pavilion, which has electricity for anyone using a crock pot or the like. Please contact Lisa Hyland at 724-387-1321 before August 13<sup>th</sup> to tell her what you're bringing and how many will attend. Looking forward to a great time!

## Annual Rotary Outing at King Reserve

by Mark Emerson

Wednesday, May 30 marked the annual work detail of the Murrysville-Export Rotary Club on the King Reserve off Crowfoot Road. Actually the work parties entered the Reserve from the home of Ben Getty, who hosted a Rotary Club picnic later in the evening. The Reserve has often been described as Ben's backyard, and for good reason. Less than a hundred yards behind his home the trail rises up from Crowfoot and continues to its far end.

The Rotarians performed several much-needed tasks. As was done last year one group tackled large patches of multi-flora rose. Included in the team was Bob Neff and his rear deck mounted mower that made it well into the Reserve to get some cutting done. He was joined by Chuck Turner and Tony Pauly in removing much unwanted vegetation from the trails.

At the opposite end of the Reserve Nick Dorsch and Wade Gibbs cleared the Reserve trail of several large (~3 ft. caliper) trees that had blocked the trail near Crowfoot. Until then folks had to crawl under or climb over the trees. Also joining those members on work details, or just for a hike in the woods, were Jim Stange, Ann Pauly, and Natalie Matta.

Conservancy members Richard Wagner, Maury Haynes, and Mark Emerson joined in by starting the repair of the deer enclosure just off the trail, and not too far from the Getty's.

Ben Getty and his wife Sylvia hosted the picnic after an hour or two was spent on the trail. A number of other Rotary members joined in at that point.

The Conservancy would like to thank all of the Rotarians once again for their work on the Reserve and we look forward to joining them next year on another outing.

## Park Chat Walks Popular

### Summer Event

by Mount Fitzpatrick

Among the things that make Murrysville such a great place to live and work are our parks and nature reserves. Throughout the spring and summer, Murrysville Recreation and the Westmoreland Conservancy host monthly morning Park Chat Walks. These casual walks provide a fine introduction to many of our parks and reserves. Those already familiar with the walks know them as an opportunity for further exploration while having fun and enjoying good company and conversation.

On a perfectly crisp and clear morning of June 20<sup>th</sup>, 14 walkers met at Pleasant Valley Park. Each of Murrysville's parks is distinctly different, and PV Park is becoming a destination of choice for mountain bikers, hikers, and – in the winter – cross-country skiers. A group of hardworking volunteers has been building an impressive series of mountain-biking and hiking trails to complement the park's old farm roads and fields that were favored last winter by cross-country skiers.

Participants in the PV Park Chat Walk explored many of the new trails, admired the sturdy bridges recently built by volunteers, took in beautiful scenery (including a farm pond and a bog), sampled blackberries and raspberries, and speculated about the sources of a variety of fresh pawprints.

**Mystery pawprint observed at PV Park**

**The remaining Park Chat Walks for the year:**

**July 18 McGinnis Nature Reserve**

**August 15 Bear Hollow Trail (meet in parking lot of Royal Highlands Field)**

**September 19 Walter Nature Reserve**

**October 17 Murrysville Community Park (meet in Athletic Field Parking Lot)**

The walks start at 8:30, rain or shine. They are free, and no registration is required (although an RSVP to 724 327-2100 X115 is helpful). Directions to the parks may be found at [www.murrysville.gov](http://www.murrysville.gov), and to the nature reserves at [www.westmorelandconservancy.org](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org).

## **More Activities for Your Calendar**

**Kellman/Skena Farm property walk:** The 22-acre Skena Farm adjoining the Kellman Reserve faces an uncertain future. It could become 38 duplexes or a valuable addition to the Lillian Kellman Nature Reserve. It contains the entire Kellman stream watershed and a half-acre educational pond. Clarence Skena is inviting all members of the Westmoreland Conservancy to walk the property to explain the benefits of preserving it naturally. Meet Clarence (724-327-3656) at 1:30 PM Sunday July 29 at 3561 North Hills Road. Look for balloons attached to the mailbox. We hope to see many of you there.

The **2007 Murrysville Community Day** will be held **Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>** at the **Municipal Complex** on Sardis Road.

### **A Question From the Editor:**

## **What's Important to You?**

I have often invited members to participate in the making of this newsletter by submitting either stories or photos. I am extending that invitation again because we want to know what is important to you. Remember that the Westmoreland Conservancy exists because we share interests. Let us know if you know of a property available for consideration. Likewise, we enjoy sharing experiences and photos. Contact me by any means convenient: website, email, smoke signal or phone.

– Shelly Tichy

### **2007 Board of Governors/Officers**

**Officers: President – Mark Emerson**

**Vice President – Betsy Aiken**

**Secretary – Joanne Kendall**

**Treasurer - Bjoerg Granger**

**Governors: Dick Byers, Doug Bauman, Cary Bohl, Katie Blackmore, Lisa Hyland, Charles Conway, Maury Hanes**

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

**July 25<sup>th</sup>**

**August 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**September 26<sup>th</sup>**



## **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**

**Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>: 8:30 AM:** Park Chat Walk, McGinnis reserve walk, rain or shine

**Wednesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>: 7:30 PM** Monthly Meeting

**Sunday, July 29<sup>th</sup>: 1:30 PM** Kellman/Skena Farm property walk

**Wednesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 AM** Park Chat Walk, Bear Hollow Trail (meet in parking lot of Royal Highlands Field)

**MOVED TO THE FALL! TBD., Members' Picnic.**

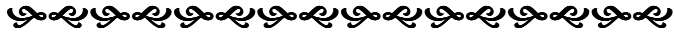
**Wednesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>: 7:30 PM** Monthly Meeting

**Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup>:** Murrysville Community Day, Municipal Complex on Sardis Road

**Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 AM** Park Chat Walk, Walter Reserve, rain or shine

**Wednesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>: 7:30 PM** Monthly Meeting

**Wednesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>: 8:30 AM** Park Chat Walk, Murrysville Community Park (meet in Athletic Field Parking Lot)



**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)



The next Newsletter is scheduled for **October 2007**.

## Eco-Fun Page

### Toad Abodes

Toad Houses really DO work! It's also true that not everyone finds toads beautiful. However, a single toad can eat about 110 beetles, ants, June bugs, grasshoppers, slugs, moths, mosquitoes and other bugs every day. That's around 3,300 every month! Toads are most active at night, so during the day they need a fairly dark, cool place to hide from the sun and predators. Encourage these beneficial eating-machines to have a nice long stay in your garden by providing toad abodes! Place in a moist, shady area in your garden and before long you'll have a new neighbor.

**You will need:** one 4" or 6" terra cotta pot per toad abode.

Outdoor paints (weather resistant)

The pots can be chipped or cracked on one side, as the pots will be pushed into the soil and a layer of dirt put in to level the interior.

Paint your pot so that the large opening is the abode's front door, like the opening of a cave. It can be painted with flowers or bugs or whatever looks homey to a toad! After the paint has dried for a day or two, find a nice shady area of the garden. **Make sure that the area HAS NOT been sprayed with any insecticides.** Scoop away enough soil for the pot to lie in without rolling away. Once the pot is positioned the way you want it, push the extra dirt in to make the floor of the Toad Abode. Now, gently introduce a toad into the area. Your flowers and vegetables will thank you for the added protection.

# Reptiles & Amphibians in Western PA

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

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American Toad	Garter snake	Queen snake
Black rat snake	Green frog	Ring necked snake
Box turtle	Hellbender	Slimy salamander
Bull frog	Jefferson	Snapping turtle
Coal skink	Leopard frog	Spiny softshell
Copperhead	Milk snake	Spotted salamander
Dusky	Mudpuppy	Spring peepers
Eastern newt	Northern watersnake	Timber rattlesnake
Fence lizard	Painted turtle	Wood frog
Five lined skink	Pickerel frog	