



WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

www.westmorelandconservancy.org

October 2008 Editors: Shelly Tichy & Kate Blackmore (724) 325-5523 wcnewsletter@comcast.net

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RALLY 2008

The National Land Conservation Conference

Rally provides the opportunity for members of land trust organizations to come together and share ideas through seminars and workshops. It offers an in-depth program of conservation education and training. Robert Burger, Kate Blackmore and I led a field trip for The Westmoreland Conservancy on Thursday, September 18th, taking in Rockland Furnace, Freedom Falls, Volant Mills and McConnell's Mill. The trip introduced participants to 18th Century Industry in Western PA. The Iron Furnaces and Mills pre-date the steel industry that Pittsburgh was so famous for in the 19th Century. Our group members came from Florida, Minnesota, Maryland, Colorado, Connecticut, California and Eastern PA.



Robert and I were able to attend Rally on behalf of the Westmoreland Conservancy. We attended workshops on Saturday and Sunday, and I was able to participate in the first Board Member Summit on Friday. The Summit allowed the attendees, all board members from land trusts all over the country, to discuss and find solutions to various issues. The information gathered and brought back to the Westmoreland Conservancy should keep us busy for quite some time!

Shelly Tichy

Rally Field Trip

A memorable day began at zero-dark-thirty as 23 of us, caffeine in hand, boarded a tour bus and headed North to the historic Rockland Iron Furnace (circa 1859). We found it nestled among mature hemlocks next to a peaceful waterfall. The day was cool and sunny, creating an atmosphere that filled the senses. Roberts' extensive knowledge of the era and area completed the experience.

From there we hiked down to the old Railroad Tunnel (1915). Two flashlights guided the group the half mile of darkness and back again to find the bus and healthy appetites awaiting us.

Due to the recent visit from Hurricane *Ike* the region was still experiencing some power outages which unfortunately included the restaurant we had reserved for lunch. However, an affiliate slightly farther away accommodated us nicely, and the food was superb.



Volant was on the schedule for the Amish experience, and the shopping, of course. The Grist Mill is presently under renovation and the water wheel adorns the front lawn of the building while the race is rebuilt. The shops are plentiful and full of wonderful crafts, antiques and reproductions.



We were all reluctant to leave Volant, but McConnell's Mill beckoned. Parked at the top, we walked down the lane thru the massive rock outcroppings. Robert, a geologist, is a font of information, and I think we all came away with a greater understanding of how the area came to be. We lingered as long as we could by the millstream, thru the covered bridge, and in the woods.

I believe that our guests had a taste of some of the best that Western Pennsylvania has to offer, and will hopefully take home with them that sense of home that we all feel when we explore this great state.

Kate Blackmore

Murrysville Community Day

Saturday, August 23rd: Murrysville Community Day

was held at the Public Works Complex on Sardis Rd. Tammy Frech from The Wildlife Center in Verona presented the Awesome Owls program at 3pm. She showed attendees an Eastern Screech, a Barred and a Great Horned Owl. For more program information, write to Tammy at: education@animalrescue.org



Geo Cache Treasure Hunt

A light drizzle didn't dampen the enthusiasm for the GeoCache Treasure Hunt, which was held Saturday, September 13th. Open to the public, this event provided the opportunity for participants to challenge their GPS skills by searching for hidden "caches" in each of five nature reserves in Murrysville; the King Nature Reserve on Crowfoot Road, the McGinnis Nature Reserve on Hunter Road, the Tomer Reserve on Twin Oaks, the Walter Reserve on Weistertown, and Potter's Corner next to the King Reserve on Crowfoot. Coordinates for all of the caches were identified at the entrance to each reserve.

If they successfully located the caches, the treasure hunters were rewarded with a chip and an opportunity to sign their name in the cache's log. A picnic followed the hunt where raffle tickets were exchanged for the cache chips and prizes awarded to the winning ticket holders. Some participants found every cache, entitling them to even more chances to win.

Generous sponsors of the event included Atrias, Bruschettas, Giant Eagle and Pasqualinos- all of Murrysville, Damons and Monster Golf of Monroeville, and Vincent's Pizza Park in Plum Boro.

Cary Bohl

Most of you are aware that when you try something new, there are often "bugs" that need to be worked out, whether it's a program or an event. This was no exception. The following is an account of working out that glitch.

GeoCache by Doug Bauman

The Westmoreland Conservancy recently hosted a Picnic and Geo-cache Treasure Hunt on Saturday, September 13th. The object was to find the caches at each reserve, then finish the day at our picnic at Townsend Park where prizes were awarded.

Saturday morning the hunt began, there was 1 cache in each of the reserves: Tomer, McGinnis, King, Walter and Potter's Corner. I decided to give it a try, having never used a GPS device before, I was anxious to try.

My friend Ladia and I decided to start early, and our first attempt was at the King reserve. We set up the coordinates in his GPS device, and proceeded to hike the path. This was fun, and we spent much of the time engrossed in interesting conversation, occasionally stopping to see if we were getting closer to the treasure. After a while we got to the top of the hill, and noticed that of the two coordinates, one was getting closer N40 27.520, yet the other was actually getting further away W79 39.965. Ladia wanted to turn around and proceed up the power line, yet I told him that would take us out of the King reserve and into a plan of homes. So we kept walking, hoping that at least one number would match up.

Soon we got to a place along the trail where indeed that one coordinate matched, yet the other was way off, but I happened to notice that the reading (39.020) was indeed about 1.0 away from the desired. Ladia and I, both engineers, decided to subtract 1.0 from the number, in the event that perhaps that one digit was transcribed incorrectly. So we reprogrammed 38.965, and voila, we were off into the woods thinking we had fixed the problem. Ladia was so anxious to go, that he led us off the trail and into the briars of the woods near the neighboring property of the rod and gun club. I didn't get a chance to tell him about the club, but luckily no shooting was heard this day. Soon I caught up with him and

we kept going toward the direction indicated by the device.

I wore shorts, and my legs were suffering at the hands of the briars. Again we met up with the trail, where it bends to the left and toward the stone foundation. His device was not a top of the line model, and it seemed to have difficulty when you get close to the point you are searching. We wandered to the stone foundation, but no luck, nothing there, so we wandered all over that vicinity trying to locate the cache. After a while we started back, thinking that maybe we wouldn't be able to find it, but he wanted to go back one more time and we did. This time I was able to see the cache, just based on luck, because it was cleverly hidden behind a tree, yet right next to the path, which I did not know a-priori. I told Ladia that we really ought to have stuck to the trail, ha!

On the way back we met up with a troop of scouts and their leaders and told them of the transcription error, to which they were grateful. The boys all seemed like they were having great fun, and they told us that the cache at Potter's corner was easily acquired. We next visited 3 more reserves and were readily able to locate the rest of the caches more easily. Ladia and I learned quite a bit about geo-cache treasure hunts and how to use GPS. It was fun, and we are looking forward to the next hunt!

Upcoming Autumn/Winter Activities

Saturday, October 11 Autumn Color Walk at Laurel Summit Trails. The area is 2,739 feet above sea level and several degrees cooler than surrounding towns. This area also provides trailhead parking for Spruce Flats bog and Wolf Rocks Trail. We'll finish our excursion at Ligonier Days.

Wednesday, October 22: Monthly meeting with Special Guest Program: Bill Powers of Pix Controller.

Saturday, November 8: McGinnis Reserve Walk, McGinnis Parking Lot, Hunter Drive, 10 AM.

In Memory of Maury Hanes

I met Maury soon after joining the Westmoreland Conservancy, a little more than 8 years ago. He had an easy laugh and an infectious, impish smile that put me (and everyone else, I'm sure) at ease.

I remember when we began discussing a website for the Conservancy. We wanted to modernize, to bring our message to "the masses". Maury went right to work, coming up with the original incarnation. Not at all intimidated by new technology, he just dove in head-first.

The most lasting image of Maury in my mind is with that axe. Let everyone else play with the loppers or the chain saw, he was using the axe. An instance: a large tree had come down on a property adjacent to the McGinnis Reserve. There were 6 or 8 of us on site, cutting up the branches and trying to reduce the size of this enormous thing on the ground. There's Maury, swinging the axe on the opposing end, smiling away. First time I ever got poison ivy. Every one of us got it that day, except him!



Shelly Tichy



Betsy Aiken

I knew Maury from the Conservancy and as a member of the Friends of Murrysville Parks (FOMP). For FOMP, he readily agreed to join our effort working to develop a strategy to control invasive plants in the parks, and although it turned out that he had to miss almost all of our meetings due to a conflict with choir practice, he was nonetheless a steadfast member of our group and supporter of our efforts. His quietly principled support of the environment, interest in nature, and ready willingness to lend a hand to help out with trail maintenance and heavy work such as chain sawing for the Conservancy will be sorely missed, along with his friendliness and sense of humor.

Saturday, September 13th there was a memorial workday at the Lillian Kellman Nature Reserve for Maury, and a ceremony for installation of the park bench which had been donated by the Hanes family.

With the untimely death of Maurice Hanes, The Conservancy has lost a very good friend and supporter. He freely gave of his time, his presence, his ideas and of his physical effort. There isn't a walking trail on the reserves that hasn't benefited from his actions with a chain saw or axe.

Have you ever seen Maury angry or upset? I haven't. But I have seen him being gracious, generous and making people at ease with his slow humor.

You are probably familiar with "Dueling Banjos". Well, we found ourselves in a situation of "dueling axes" over a particularly difficult tree root. My double-bladed axe was a lot shinier than Maury's, but somehow his axe seemed to be a lot more accurate!

Maury's activities were not limited to the Conservancy. It was a real pleasure to go canoeing with Maury and Marge, but when Maury was leading why was there always a headwind, irrespective of our direction of travel?

Your presence is much missed.

Mount Fitzpatrick

Submit Your E-Mail Address To Have Event Updates & Information Delivered

Be more closely informed about events, walks and excursions. Provide your E-mail address on the attached form and mail it to the address provided. You can also E-mail it to the Conservancy website at contact@westmorelandconservancy.org.

2008 Board of Governors/Officers

Officers: President – Shelly Tichy

Vice President – Katie Blackmore

Secretary – Joanne Kendall

Treasurer - Bjoerg Granger

Governors: Mount Fitzpatrick, Doug Bauman,

Cary Bohl, Charles Conway,

Richard Wagner, Maury Hanes,

Mark Emerson, Betsy Aiken

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.

October 23rd

November 19th**

December 17th**

****Holiday Schedule**

The next Newsletter is scheduled for **January 2009**

Westmoreland Conservancy

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

contact@westmorelandconservancy.org

Schedule of Upcoming Events

Please respond if attending an outing to: wcnewsletter@comcast.net

Saturday, October 11th: Autumn Color Walk at Laurel Summit Trails, finish at Ligonier Days. Meet at Panera Bread/Murrysville at 9AM.

Wednesday, October 22nd : Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room. **Special Guest Speaker: Bill Powers/Pix Controller**

Saturday, November 8th: McGinnis Trail Walk. What is there to see in the reserves in winter? Let’s find out! McGinnis parking lot, 10 AM.

Wednesday, December 17th: Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room.

Wednesday, January 28th : Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room.

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

Observe how light affects color development

What you need:

a tree with leaves that turn red in autumn

aluminum foil or heavy paper and masking tape.

What you do:

1. Before the leaves turn colors in the fall, find a maple tree, flowering dogwood, sweet gum, or other tree or shrub that you know will turn bright red or purple.
2. Find several leaves that receive bright sunlight, and cover part of them with foil or heavy paper and tape.
3. After the leaves have changed color, remove the covering and observe the different colors underneath. These are the colors that were in the leaf all summer. The bright reds and purples are only made in the fall, with exposure to light.



Autumn Leaves



W Y N R T T W F P W E O T J P L C G
 N K R H L A S K L S R D K H N H N R
 R C T S T N Z U O A J N G B L J I M
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 B R W Y B L E Z N N I O Y M N E Y N
 C M L L G O T H M T P G K L I L C N
 A J Z X L T N U T H F P H F T P O I
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|----------------|----------------|---|-------------|
| anthocyanin | glucose |  | roots |
| autumn | green | | sunlight |
| brown | leaf | | tannin |
| carbon dioxide | nitrogen | | temperature |
| carotene | orange | | water |
| chlorophyll | photosynthesis | | xanthophyll |
| colors | pigments | | yellow |
| deciduous | purple | | |
| food | red |  | |

