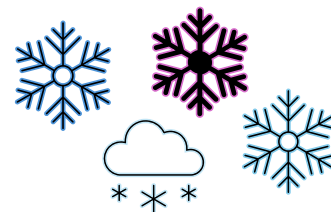




Volume 34  
Issue 1



Winter 2025

## ANNOUNCEMENT!

Westmoreland Conservancy is happy to announce that we have successfully renewed our



accredited status. We are committed to upholding standards and best practices to maintain public trust in our conservation work. This is Westmoreland Conservancy's second renewal since our initial 2013 accreditation. We have more than doubled our conserved acreage since 2013 and have



committed to a wide range of projects designed to improve the quality of the protected habitat as well as the human experience interacting with nature. There are currently nearly 500 accredited land trusts in 46 states and territories.

Congratulations to BOB SLOBODA, who picked up the reigns and volunteered to manage our accreditation team.

## Upcoming Events

### 1st Day Hike at the Walter Reserve Wednesday, January 1 at 11AM

Start the 2025 New Year with a walk at the Walter Reserve. We'll leave the lot on Weistertown Rd. at 11AM and head up the yellow trail to the white loop, reconnect with the yellow trail and then take the blue trail back to the lot. The trail system is about 1.25 miles with some elevation and several interesting habitat areas. There is a magnificent stand of Devil's Walking Stick, a small white pine "plantation" where we often find owl pellets, and a large paw paw colony to note a few features. Please register in advance:



[www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration)



### Walk Through the Seasons Hike Series at the King Reserve with Lindsey Praksti

Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn. Make a date to experience the seasonal changes in the forest along the red trail at the King Reserve with Lindsey.

**February 9, April 27, July 13, and September 28;** head out at 10AM from the King parking lot on Crowfoot Road. You don't want to miss any part of this hike series! Event Registration:

[www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration)

## Apple Tree Pruning Saturday, February 15, Morosini Reserve at 9AM

This is year #8 of our quest to not only revitalize the old variety trees at the reserve, but to make others more comfortable with the process before trying at home. We have seen these trees bloom and produce the very same year!



Be at parking lot #1 at the bend on the left by 9AM. Bring your work gloves, loppers, clippers, pole saws, and questions so that our team can share their experience. Event Registration:

[www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration)

## First Day of Spring Hike at McGinnis Reserve Thursday, March 20 at 4PM



Experience the onset of SPRING with us at our McGinnis Reserve. The seasons officially change at 10:01AM Thursday, March 20! We'll follow the trail around to see what may be emerging from the sleeping winter soils and talk about the history of the property.

It will likely be damp, so have rain gear and boots! The hike will start promptly at 4pm from the parking lot on Hunter Drive, so come early! Please register:

[www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration)

## Earth Day with Westmoreland Conservancy at the Morosini Reserve

Earth Day is April 22nd which falls on a Tuesday this year.

Westmoreland Conservancy will be observing it **Saturday, April 19th**, and will be seeding the **Graft Pollinator Meadow** with a more permanent assortment of perennial and annual flowers for the bees, butterflies and birds. We'll also have a few shrubs to plant around the outside perimeter of the field.



Bring work gloves and rakes, and dress for whatever Mother Nature has in mind for the day. We will set out from the Universal Pedestrian Trail (UPT) Kiosk at **9:30AM**. Park at the upper lot at the top of Morosini Farm Road. Please register: [www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration)

## Annual Members Meeting & Elections Wednesday, April 23 at 7PM



Each year at the April meeting Westmoreland Conservancy presents the opportunity to elect new Board members and then elect officers. Your vote is very important to us and **WE WANT YOU** to have a voice. The meeting will be at 7PM at the Delmont Public Library and on Zoom (please email us at [contact@westmorelandconservancy.org](mailto:contact@westmorelandconservancy.org) for the Zoom link) The Members Meeting will open with a review of the proposed slate for the election to the Board of Governors, so please plan to attend.



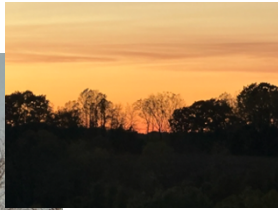
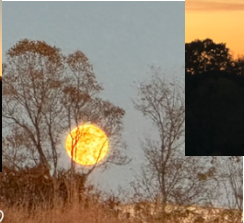
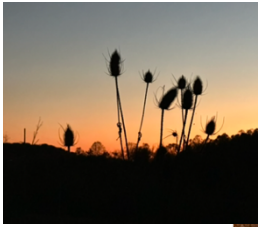
Please register: [www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/event-registration)

# 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2024 Events

## Autumn Excursion at McConnell's Mill 10/5



## Super Hunter's Moon at Morosini 10/17



## Witch Hazel Hike at McGinnis 10/19



## OptOutside Hike Along DHCT 11/29



## Flock of wild turkeys at King



## Hot Chocolate Hike with Murrysville Recreation Dept at McGinnis Reserve 12/14



# Projects, Plans & Promises

Westmoreland Conservancy does not shy away from ambitious projects. We have several on the horizon, including the **study of our conserved forests** to plan for their future health.

There are a variety of projects in the planning stages at the Morosini Reserve. The **restoration and expansion of the Universal Pedestrian Trail (UPT)** looms large and is very visible. We have a restoration test area set up in the first 100' from the kiosk and we have initiated a fundraising campaign (\$33/per linear foot) to see it through. The expansion will take the surface trail across the length of the pond, corrects the drainage issues and will meet up at the trail intersection leading to the fields.

We have had a 5-acre area cleared immediately west of the UPT in preparation for a **Wildflower Trail**. It will be mowed throughout the next few seasons in order to get rid of the overabundant switchgrass that has long dominated the fields. The plan is to turn the surface next fall and seed the area with native annual and perennial wildflowers. There will be a meandering trail allowing people to carefully walk amongst the flowers (remember... bees!) and connect with the yellow trail at the north end of the plot. The wildflowers will also create more viewing interest from the Observation Blind with more bird activity.

There is an opportunity for Westmoreland Conservancy to participate in an ambitious plan to restore healthy **GRASSLAND HABITAT** to approximately 30 acres in the eastern fields of the Morosini Reserve. Grasslands are the most rapidly disappearing habitat, as they tend to be the most buildable. By restoring the fields we expect to see more birds and wildlife that thrive in this type of area. It requires removal of such invasive species as autumn olive and the aggressive switchgrass and locust trees. It may take a few years to establish the healthy grasslands, but it is a worthwhile project that WC is very interested in pursuing.



Another project that WC is eager to pursue is the **Antique Apple Orchard**. This will be situated in the south field of the Morosini Reserve. The plan is to mow the field for several seasons (that pesky switchgrass again) and then allow individuals to purchase old variety apple trees to plant in the assigned area. The trees will be made available for purchase and families will be encouraged to help nurture and care for their trees. We think it will be a wonderful way to honor loved ones as well as a place to enjoy organic, flavorful apples!



Westmoreland Conservancy has also received a generous donation to develop and implement the creation of an **education center at the Morosini Reserve**. It will be part of a very necessary multi-purpose structure to ensure proper management capacity for the reserve.

We have plans to replace the stable roof at the **Peaceful Stable Reserve** in 2025. We will also be doing some major restoration work on several of the trees at that reserve. This will require ladders and some very dedicated work, so contact us if you're interested in being involved. This will NOT be the February 15<sup>th</sup> teaching event but will be done in that same general timeframe. We are also planning to do some pollinator and wildflower seeding at the hilltop once the area is properly prepared. A very generous neighbor has mowed the perimeter and some targeted areas for us to keep the area open. The ground should be much less soggy given the water runoff remediation completed in July.



# DONATIONS

Donations and support are **ALWAYS** welcome, however we recommend June 1st annually, since that is the beginning of our fiscal year. Your donations help to support our projects and events. They help us achieve our goals and continue to grow, making nature available to EVERYONE!



Student (under 18): .....	\$10
News Recipient.....	\$25
Conservation Ally.....	\$50
Steward Supporter.....	\$100
Resource Partner.....	\$500



Or: Any Monetary Donation

Your commitment to making an annual donation helps us plan our operating budget, knowing what amount we can expect to receive every year. Any tax-deductible donation of \$25 or more qualifies for free membership, which gives you the right to vote at our Annual Members Meeting in April. You can renew your annual donation through the site or support us with a new donation. Any donation can be easily managed through our website: <http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org/donate>, or mailed directly to Westmoreland Conservancy, 1 Priority Lane, Unit 446, Murrysville, PA 15668.



**Westmoreland Conservancy Reserves are privately owned lands that are open to the public for permitted use. Dogs are to be on-leash. NO motorized vehicles aside from mobility aids.**

PLEASE observe Leave No Trace sensibilities and take out anything you take in. Do NOT leave trash at the reserves. <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

Westmoreland Conservancy Online:  
Website: <http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org> Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/WestmorelandConservancy> Instagram:  
[https://www.instagram.com/westmoreland\\_conservancy/](https://www.instagram.com/westmoreland_conservancy/)

# Westmoreland Conservancy

1 Priority Lane, Unit 446

Murrysville, PA. 15668

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



## 2024/25 Board of Governors

Alan Halperin  
Lindsey Praksti  
Ella Stewart

## 2024/25 Officers

President	Shelly Tichy
Vice President	Rob Malley
Secretary	Bob Sloboda
Treasurer	Chip Brown

## Our Vision

To preserve natural, rural, and historic landscapes for Nature's benefit and the enrichment of future generations.

## Our Mission

Westmoreland Conservancy preserves, enhances, and connects land, habitat, and green space through acquisition, stewardship, and cooperation with local communities and other organizations.

## Schedule of Events

**\*\*Watch our Facebook page or sign up for email reminders for work days!\*\***

Please wear sturdy shoes, leg protection and weather-appropriate attire. Scheduled Events may be canceled in the event of Unsuitable Weather.

01/01/2025: First Day Hike Walter Reserve Weistertown Road 11AM

01/22/2025: Monthly Meeting Delmont Public Library 7PM

02/09/2025: Walk Through the Seasons with Lindsey Praksti King Reserve Crowfoot Road 10AM

02/26/2025: Monthly Meeting Delmont Public Library 7PM

02/15/2025: Apple Tree Pruning Morosini Reserve lot #1 Morosini Farm Road 9AM

03/20/2025: First Day of Spring Hike at McGinnis Reserve Hunter Drive 4PM

03/26/2025: Monthly Meeting Delmont Public Library 7PM

04/19/2025: Earth Day at Morosini Reserve UPT lot Morosini Farm Road 9:30AM

04/23/2025: Annual Members Meeting & Elections Delmont Public Library 7PM