

Preserving the land



Protecting the future

The Conservator

VOLUME XI NO. 2

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BEDMINSTER LAND CONSERVANCY

SUMMER / FALL 2009

... A regional land trust serving the upper Bucks County area since 1997

BLC Receives State Grant for Traditional Artisans' Show; Presents Student Awards

The Bedminster Land Conservancy is pleased to announce the receipt of a tourism grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development. We thank our legislators, Representative Marguerite Quinn and Senator Chuck McIlhinney for their support with our grant application.

The funds assisted the conservancy in the promotion of the Traditional Artisans' Show to attract more visitors into our area and further support tourism in Bucks County. The Traditional Artisans' Show supports this because of its broad appeal with the artisans' clientele (and the artisans themselves) traveling from many different states for the weekend show.

With the grant funding, the BLC was able to better and more broadly publicize this special show and sale of the artisans' new line of items. The BLC also worked with our local Chamber of Commerce to create connections with other local businesses and tourism opportunities.

The fourth Traditional Artisans' Preview Show generates an unusual opportunity for community participation. Held at the Upper Bucks Technical School, students learning the craft of fine furniture making or the culinary arts have an opportunity to showcase their new talents and learn from the nation's foremost artisans in a variety of arts, from folk art to fine furniture to quilting. Eve and

cont. on page 2

Volunteers Have More Fun!

Together, we can make a difference. Will you join in?

As with many charitable organizations, volunteers are the lifeblood of the BLC and we celebrate their long-lasting contributions! **Did you know that in Pennsylvania:**

- 28% of residents volunteer - ranking Pennsylvania in on year as 29th among the 50 states and Washington, DC
- This resulted in nearly 350 million hours of service
- On average, each resident volunteered 35 hours
- \$7.0 billion of service contributed *

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12th Annual Meeting Report

This year's annual meeting in April was highlighted by an energetic and very interesting presentation by our guest speaker, Kelly Germann, of EcoTyro Consulting. A wildlife biologist, Ms. Germann delighted the audience with her presentation of "Backyard Wildlife Habitats". While illustrating the importance of maintaining native plant species and supporting natural habitats, she demonstrated how only a few key elements are needed to support the native wildlife and how easy it is for all of us to achieve that in our own yards. She also showed wonderful pictures illustrating the diversity of wildlife and species in our area.

The presentation summarized the 5 key points of creating a habitat suitable for supporting wildlife: food – seeds, fruits, foliage, nuts, sap, pollen; water – for drinking and bathing; shelter or cover – places where wildlife can be safe from predators and weather; places to raise young – dens, nests, tree cavities, thickets, rock walls; and sustainable, "green" gardening – environmentally safe practices, little or no pesticide use, composting, mulching. If you are interested in learning more, contact us and we can send

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Len Marschark, artisans and coordinators of this event, remarked that, "There is a real synergy between the school training students to continue a skill or trade, artisans preserving a traditional handcraft and the BLC working to preserve our agricultural lands and protect our communities."

Recognizing the importance of acknowledging student achievements in the upper Bucks County area that relate to the BLC's mission of protecting our farmland and agricultural heritage, the BLC recently established a scholarship for Animal Technology and Horticulture students at the Technical School. After reviewing the applications, all supported by teacher recommendations, the BLC presented an award of \$150 to Erin Bannon for Excellence in Horticulture, and an award of \$150 to Kathryn Knisley for Excellence in Animal Technology to help with their continuing education. The artisans who are participating in the BLC's fourth annual Traditional Artisans' Preview Show contributed a third award for Cabinetmaking, presented to Evan Reed.

What better way for the BLC to protect our future than to encourage our youth to learn and continue the protection of natural flora and sustainable, safe local farming.

☞ Eve Marschark

Barns & Farms Tour, 2009
sheepherding demos, cows, horses, barns,
pumpkins & refreshments

Sunday October 18th
11 am to 4 pm
RAIN OR SHINE



Tickets: \$15
in advance,
\$20 day of Tour
Children are free!

Call
215-795-2352
for tickets
and information



"...Farms offer more than pastoral beauty - they are the backbone of regional economies and communities, provide food for our tables, and offer significant opportunity to protect our environment and natural resources."

American Farmland Trust

you some handouts Kelly provided at the meeting, including the application for having your yard certified by the National Wildlife Federation as a backyard wildlife habitat.

We were pleased to present a special recognition award to Ann McAuliffe. Ann has headed our mailing committee for many years and along with her family was responsible for labeling, sorting, and mailing our newsletters, membership renewals, and special-event mailings. We thank Ann for her many years of service in this capacity and her continued support of the BLC. Her years of volunteer service to the organization, and those of her family, are remarkable. It is volunteers like Ann who helped build the BLC into the organization it is today, and who continue to directly support significant land preservation efforts in this region through the generous donation of their time.

Nearly 100 of our members enjoyed the wonderful feast prepared by Sandi Cowperthwaite and Susan Delin. The dinner seems to be a particular draw to our annual meetings, and everyone enjoys spending this time meeting other BLC members.

Barb Thomas generously donated a beautiful hand-crafted quilt throw again this year for a special raffle and one of our guests, Bob Morris from Springfield Township, was the lucky winner.

As usual, the evening finished with the drawing for numerous door prizes, including plants, hats, note cards, and homemade offerings. We hope you were a winner – and we hope to see you next year!

☞ Wendy P. Battisti

VOLUNTEERS WANTED (cont. from p. 1)

From our board of directors to our various committees, volunteers have built this organization and positively impacted educational and land preservation efforts in upper Bucks County.

We are proud of the dedicated, skilled service provided by our many volunteers. Many have faithfully served for 5, 10, and even the full 12+ years in various parts of the organization. Our volunteers each bring talents – some they didn't even know they had – and learn much in return. We also have formed many wonderful friendships and expanded our knowledge as a result. Our volunteers can take pride in making a difference in how we are protecting our lands, resources, and rural culture in this region.

We would welcome you and your talents. Whether you can dedicate the time to a specific committee or just help out for a few hours on occasion, we can find a place for you and involve you in our efforts to protect this wonderful area. Help us raise money, share your skills, and learn more about land preservation, all while having fun with people who share your concerns. Tasks such as greeting tour participants, selling tickets or helping to post flyers are just a few of the ways you could assist us. We know you will enjoy meeting and socializing with our other wonderful volunteers. We need you! Please call 215-0795-2352 and leave a message with your name and number. Or e-mail us through our website.

* Data from: Corporation for National and Community Service. **Volunteering in America 2009: State and City Trends and Rankings.** www.volunteeringinamerica.gov (accessed Aug. 2009)

Support Your Local Farmers

Moyer's Village Farm in Dublin 215-249-3616
 183 N. Main Street, Dublin
 Hay and straw, express wagons, garden furniture.

Trauger's Farm Market 610-847-5702
 Route 611 (across the canal) Kintnersville
 Winter - pumpkins, open for dairy produce, their own eggs, candy, jellies, fruit & gift baskets, flowers. Phone orders for freezing. Market open all year round.

Dean Overholt 215-766-0534
 311 Irish Meetinghouse Rd., Bedminster Twp.
 Boards and trains horses in a state-of-the-art horse farm, hay.

Penn Vermont Fruit Farm 215-795-2475
 Rolling Hills Road, Bedminster Twp.
 Spring - strawberries, raspberries (pick your own). • Summer - Corn, tomatoes, variety of fresh fruit and vegetables • Fall - apples, pears, cider, pumpkins, variety of squash, honey, maple syrup.

AGA Farms 215-795-0660
 1333 Elephant Road, Bedminster Twp.
 Fall - pumpkins, corn maze, hay rides • Winter - Christmas trees • Spring - B&B evergreens and shade trees. • Now available for field restoration - reclaiming abandoned farmland with a powerful new machine - a combination of huge brushhog and rototiller that opens the soil while grinding above ground.

James and Gail Crooke
Windybush Hay Farms 215-766-2865
 215-669-8545
 108 Irish Meeting House Road, Bedminster Twp.
 Hay, straw, Easter lambs. Manure, triple-ground mulch, mushroom soil.

Babydoll Sheep Farm 215-453-9164
 1385 Elephant Rd. Bedminster Twp.
 www.babydollsheepfarm.com • Baby doll sheep for sale as pets.

Hellerick's Farm 215-766-8388
 5500 Easton Rd. (Rt. 611 S. of Plumsteadville)
 Spring - strawberries. (Pick your own) • Fall - Pumpkin Festival.

Mark Schmidt 215-795-2591
 Deer Run Road, Bedminster Twp. • Hay and straw.

Glenn Wismer 215-766-0675
 87 Log Cabin Road, Bedminster Twp. • Hay and straw.

Matt Kanagy 215-527-2370
 235 Smith School Road, Bedminster Twp. • Hay.

Myerov Family Farm Market & CSA 215-249-3145
 306 Elephant Rd. - 1 mile north of 313, Bedminster Twp.
 Tomatoes, fancy salad mix, fragrant herbs and other produce.
NEW! Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): Myerov Farm Members receive weekly share of produce.

 Any local farmer wishing to be listed here should call
215-795-2352 and leave a message. This service is free!

Save the Date

**Fifth Annual Barns and Farms Tour
 October 18, 2009**

In keeping with our mission of protecting farmlands and our rural lifestyle, the Bedminster Land Conservancy fund raising committee and barn and farm residents are offering the fifth annual tour of area farms and barns on Sunday, October 18, from 11 AM until 4 PM, rain or shine.

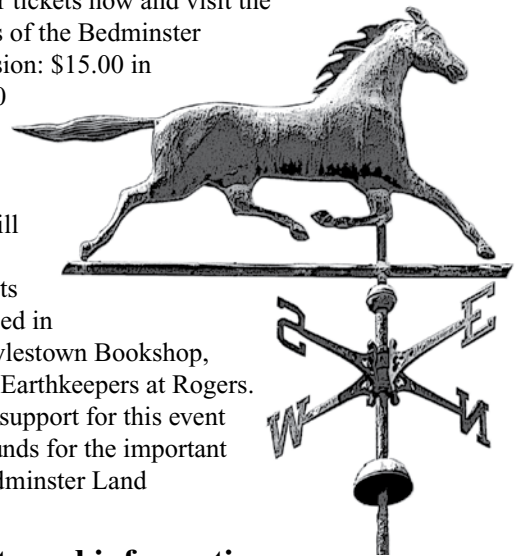
This is a family event and children are welcome. There will be farms with horses and cows and some of the most beautiful barns in the Bedminster area for your viewing. The history of the barns and their architectural features will be described; demonstrations will also be on hand, including the popular sheepherding demo.

We will have a total of 6 barns on the tour. Here's just a preview of the highlights to entice you: one of the barns is a stone bank barn featuring three distinguished arches. The arched forebay is a rare feature in Bucks County. Other barns include one that is said to date to 1810 and another that is called an English Lake District barn, referring to bank barn style used to accommodate hilly terrains.

Reserve your tickets now and visit the barns and farms of the Bedminster area. Admission: \$15.00 in advance. \$20.00 on tour day.

Children are free. Light refreshments will be available for purchase. Tickets may be purchased in advance at: Doylestown Bookshop, Dublin Agway, Earthkeepers at Rogers.

Community support for this event helps to raise funds for the important work of the Bedminster Land Conservancy.



**For tickets and information,
 or to help underwrite this event,
 please call: 215-795-2352**

Also check our website www.bedminsterlandconservancy.org

Please save the date and
 enjoy the rural pleasures of our area!

As for the future,
 your task is not to foresee it,
 but to enable it.

—Antoine de Saint Exupery

Sunshine & Shade: Our 11th Annual Garden Tour Shined!

After much rain, it was a perfect sunny day for viewing the five beautiful private gardens in Bedminster and Plumstead Townships. The annual plant sale, always a favorite, attracted many people as did the work of several local artisans. Ice cream from Chubby's Ice Cream was also a treat! Earthkeepers at Roger's (formerly Roger's Road Stand) and Linden Hill Nursery were also on the tour, providing tours and more beautiful specimen plants for viewing and purchase. Master Gardeners were available at each site, and provided educational information on the varieties of plants, sun requirements and more.

At the Sedlock property, the driveway wound its way under a lovely canopy of trees, past the shade garden, lush with lirope, hosta and impatiens, which was accentuated with rocks, and led visitors



Perennial gardens surround and accent historic features such as this well

to the elevated terrace at the back of the house. The stone terrace, edged with cordyalis and other shade-loving plants, overlooked a pond and gardens surrounding a charming well. Continuing around the back of the house, Mazus (bird's foot) groundcover spread between the stepping stones cushioned your footsteps that led to the secluded, but sunny gardens that enclosed the pool and pool house. The scent of sweet bay magnolia and roses climbing the pool house made visitors linger.

The Detweiler's sun-drenched gardens, set far back from the road beyond the farmfields, featured a living sundial as well as a



A collection of hypertufas showcase a variety of sedums and succulents.

collection of hypertufas (garden troughs) handcrafted by the home owner and brimming with various sedums and succulents. The vegetable garden boasted a display that rivaled any grocery store. A collection of orange blooms, from bright Japanese honeysuckle vines to the coral water lilies and peachy yarrow drew your



Friendly frogs in the Detweilers' water garden, surrounded by various shades of pink and orange - from soft coral to vibrant fuschia.

attention to the water garden, where friendly frogs soaked up the sun and "sang" for visitors. The property, which is farmed, has been preserved with a conservation easement held by Bedminster Township and Bedminster Land Conservancy.

Roses at their height of bloom welcomed visitors to the Wolfe property. Many visitors admired (and envied) the beautiful vegetable garden growing within the confines of a split-rail fence that was so artistically designed it could pass as a painting. Strawberries filled a three-tiered octagonal raised bed. In addition to sunny shrub and perennial beds, the terrace and dining area were punctuated by beautiful containers with a pergola above and fragrant roses along



Growing in the shade around the base of a tree, there were combinations of plants with contrasting bright colors ranging from the pink New Guinea impatiens and lime-green coleus to the delicate yellow flowers of the lady's mantle and it's curly, scalloped leaves, accented by the dainty leaves of the woodruff and large variegated caladium.

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Preservation Perspective

Conservation Easement Monitoring - An Ongoing Relationship between Landowners and the BLC

The BLC has a team of monitors, which includes several members of the Board of Directors and our staff, who carry out the annual task of visiting each of the conserved properties entrusted to the BLC. This team is in action twelve months a year; rain or shine. Monitoring entails visiting the conserved lands, often walking with the landowners, assuring that the properties are in of compliance with the terms of the Conservation Easements (CE). While we typically refer to the “property” being in compliance, it is, in reality, the owners of the land that assure full compliance with the terms of their particular CE.

Because BLC monitors visit all of the many different properties over the course of a year, they have the opportunity to interact with many landowners and to gain a sense of common challenges. Monitors are a point of confluence for common problems and solutions. One thing is most prominent – CE holders are excellent land stewards driven by a love of their properties and the flora, fauna, streams, and scenic vistas that make up the whole of their cherished places.

A very satisfying experience was being able to put a landowner who was facing a daunting task of dealing with a serious erosion problem, in touch with one who had faced and solved a different, yet in many respects, similar problem.

In the spring of 2006, Bucks County experienced several days of incredibly heavy rain fall. In an area along the Delaware Canal and River bordered by very steep slopes, the results were devastating for a beautiful and historically accurate farmstead with water runoff completely overwhelming drainage channels and stream banks, causing a new course for the stream. Debris was strewn across the field, the soil was carried away and lost, and deep gully erosion remained. Plans for planting crops were put completely on hold.

Without quick action to repair the failed stream bank wall, more erosion would occur and the loss of soil would continue during future storms. The task was complex, expensive, and large in scope, but the owners of this exquisite historic farmstead set about repairing the damage. (See *Conservator*, Winter/Spring ‘08). When one is dealing with repair of a waterway there are myriad state and federal agencies to inform and consult with to assure regulatory compliance, and proper permits must be obtained before work may begin.

In time, the stream bank was rebuilt, the field restored and replanted, and the scars of the deluge healed over with native grasses and trees. The project was exhausting and time consuming, but our landowner saw the job completed in exemplary fashion.

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Land Stewardship: Bamboo - Recipe for Eradication!

An Effective Method for Eradicating Invasive Bamboo

Years ago my wife and I purchased a small container of ornamental bamboo and thought it would look beautiful in a forested area on our property in Solebury Township. Little did we know that this small plant would turn into a huge problem in a very short amount of time. The sunny, moist conditions in our woodland were very conducive to rapid growth, and within a few years the bamboo covered nearly 1 acre of land. We realized that we needed to stop the bamboo. Easier said than done!

We applied herbicide (a brand that was safe for a protected natural area) several times to no avail. There was always rapid re-growth following the application. We tried covering the area with thick black plastic. Within a few weeks, the bamboo sprouted through and around the plastic. Then we happened upon a website called “You Bet Your Garden” featuring WHYY’s Mike McGrath, host of the show with the same name. This website is full of information on organic gardening. It was from this website that we found the solution to our bamboo problem.

“You Bet Your Garden” suggested using strong vinegar. The vinegar is acidic and essentially sterilizes the soil, thereby killing all the plants. We poured 200 grain vinegar onto the soil, using approximately 300 gallons. It is best to apply to very dry soil. Over the next year, when the soil returned to a more neutral pH, the native plants re-vegetated the treated area, but not the bamboo!

We were relieved to find a safe, organic, and effective treatment for eradicating bamboo.

✧ Bob Holmquist

The BLC thanks the Holmquists for sharing their stewardship success so that other landowners may benefit! For more info, visit www.youbetyourgarden.org or call 1-888-346-9499.

Fall is the best time for planting!

–Bedminster Land Conservancy

When you plant a tree,
never plant only one.

Plant three – one for shade,
one for fruit, one for beauty.

–African proverb

He who plants a tree plants a hope.

–Welsh proverb

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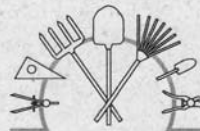
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The Big Picture: Land Conservation Counteracts Global Warming

There is a relationship between the work of land trusts and the efforts to mitigate the global warming crisis, also referred to as climate change. When we preserve land at the local level we are protecting not only the local community's resources, but also the ecosystem of the region. Land preservation makes a difference in the health of our environment by lessening the sources that contribute to global warming.

Forests have a direct positive impact by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere; carbon dioxide is the gas that contributes to the warming of our atmosphere, resulting in the melting of our ice caps, and in turn the change in sea levels and temperatures. Protecting our woodlands assures that this carbon absorption, or "sequestration", will continue. In contrast, losing forests and converting land to buildings has a negative effect and adds to the production of carbon dioxide and the climate change.

Another relevant benefit of land preservation is that the land we have saved could well provide the habitat that helps species adjust to the change in climate. As the climate warms (already since 1970, our average temperature has risen 1.5°), the range of species will extend and move to northern areas that approximate the prior, cooler temperatures.

With increasing severity of weather and predicted rise of sea levels, conserved land plays an even more important role in reducing effects of storms. Developed land contributes to flooding issues, whereas conserved land with agriculture, woodlands, riparian corridors and wetlands, can serve to lessen erosion, flooding, and storm damage.

Farmland as well as forests can help to sequester carbon. Good farming practices that are "sustainable" include composting, no tilling, cover cropping, manuring, and soil conservation erosion control measures. Our soils, our food, our water, our health are all interconnected so any measure that is environmentally beneficial ultimately lessens the contributors to and impacts from global warming.

Individual property owners can also take measures to reduce their "carbon footprint", which is the production of carbon dioxide (CO₂). You can contact organizations that offset your carbon footprint through planting trees. For your own property, planting trees has many benefits: trees draw CO₂ from the air, absorb water to reduce flooding and silt to improve water quality, provide shade and absorb heat. An added bonus is the increase in property values!

Native plants are drought-tolerant and thrive with the least care, while also protecting our wildlife habitats and biodiversity. Reduced pest control and mowing are additional benefits. Reducing paved areas maximizes the absorption of water. In suburbs, lawns are actually the largest contributor for water runoff due to the shallow root system of grass which results in the lawns acting almost as impervious as pavement. Vegetated buffers for creeks are effective in controlling runoff and erosion, both of which help water quality.

What we do with our own properties and inside the home can have an impact; collectively our actions can make a noticeable difference.

For more info: PA Dept. of Environmental Protection, www.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: Climate Change; U.S. Climate Change Science Program, www.climatechange.gov for info on calculating and reducing your own "carbon footprint" see www.carbonfootprint.com

✧ Barbara Drew

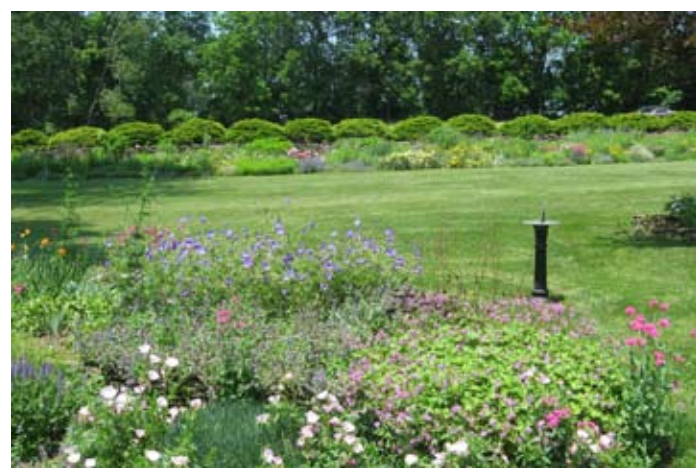
SUNSHINE & SHADE (cont. from p. 4)



Plentiful roses and fragrant lavender frame the pergola and terrace planters

the stone wall. Beside the historic bank barn, shade-loving plants contrasted brilliantly around the base of a tree. At the Wolfe gardens, plants, ice cream treats and raffle tickets were sold.

In Plumstead, two adjoining properties were featured. The Duckett garden exploded with fabulous, extensive perennial borders



Perennial "English" gardens were a highlight of the Bedminster Land Conservancy's garden tour.

in the English garden style, set on a sunny hillside with historic barns nearby. Elegant in their simplicity, a profusion of pink and purple contrasted with white and yellow perennials, including such favorites as poppies, peonies, Siberian iris, oxeye daisies, salvia, achilla and nepeta. A lovely small pond with a trickling waterfall nestled in the shady corner of the barn offered a quiet respite.

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Kenneth M. Benton
PRESIDENT



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Farm Fresh Recipe Corner

Zucchini Pancakes

- 2 c finely shredded fresh zucchini (about 2 squash)
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- ¾ c all-purpose flour
- ½ t granulated sugar
- ½ t salt
- 3 Tb extra virgin olive oil or vegetable oil
(can substitute part of this with applesauce)
- 4 t baking powder
- ¼ c melted butter or melted margarine

Serves 6.

Wash and shred (no need to peel) zucchini on a fine shredder. In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs; add shredded zucchini and mix well using a fork. Add flour, sugar, salt and olive oil (or applesauce) and stir well to blend. Finally, add baking powder and mix using a spoon.

Preheat griddle to high, or if using a heavy-duty frying pan, heat to medium-high heat; adjust heat if necessary. Rub grill or frying pan with oil before cooking each batch of pancakes. Spoon batter onto hot griddle (about 2 tablespoons for each pancake). Cook until bubbles on the top of the pancake almost stop, about 1 1/2 minutes; turn pancake over and continue to cook for another 1 to 1 1/2 minutes or until pancakes are done.

Serve immediately, (or keep warm in an oven by first spreading some butter on the pancakes). Serve with your choice of jams or syrups, yogurt, sour cream or applesauce. These pancakes are delicious for breakfast, brunch or as a snack.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT MONITORING (cont. from p. 5)

While monitoring another beautiful conserved farmstead, the monitors found themselves discussing stream bank erosion and some worsening gully erosion from storm-water run off on a hilly farm field – not an untypical situation. It was not until we were uphill of the stone farm house walking through woodland that we discovered some of the most spectacular erosion that we had ever seen – gullies running parallel to the house and over six feet in depth. Over time as the gullies deepen and widen, they would probably overflow or wash out with potentially devastating results for the house and downhill fields.

The owner of this property had been struggling to find a path toward correcting the multiple soil erosion problems that beset his property. It is always gratifying when a landowner wishes to correct problems in a way that is best for the long term health of their properties. This is a defining characteristic of those individuals who care passionately about their land and have taken the step of placing a CE or purchasing a preserved property.

Through the suggestion of the BLC, the owner who had dealt with storm water issues agreed to share his experiences and solutions and our erosion-beset landowner. The Conservancy is pleased to offer land stewardship assistance, providing our perspective and often technical assistance hand-outs or referrals to specialists to help landowners with their lands. The prospect of connecting two devoted land stewards - one who faced and fixed a major wash-out with the other yet to embark on repairing years of field run-off, is full of promise.

Travelling across the sublimely beautiful, rich, rolling land of upper Bucks County while monitoring conserved properties in five townships, reminds us that we are a collective community. All of us who appreciate natural lands and their vital significance and are members of the Conservancy make a difference. Together we are “preserving the land ... protecting the future.”

☞ Gib Battisti

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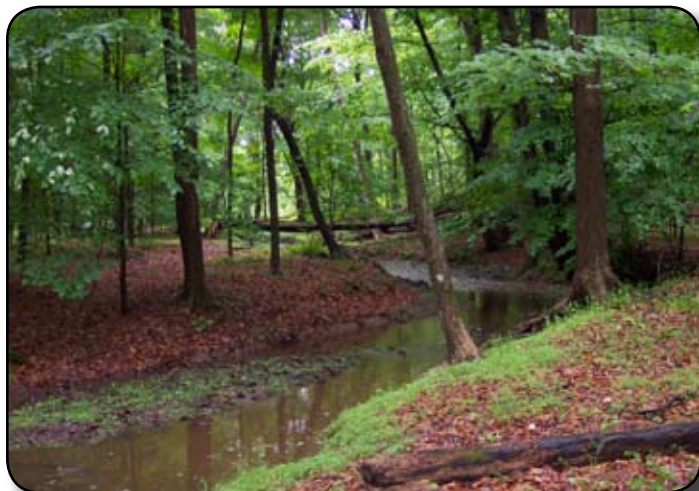
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Sweat shirts are beige with BLC green logo. Excellent quality!
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- ORNAMENTS** \$8.00
Ornament is made of gold flashed brass with BLC logo and byline.
- NOTECARDS** \$10.00
Boxed set of 10 photo cards & envelopes, 2 each of 5 scenes of preserved land, Photos by Robert Cherry, Dan Devery, Barbara Drew, and Joan Weber.

To order, send a check made out to the Bedminster Land Conservancy and a list of items (and sizes). Please include your telephone number in case we have a question. Mail to: BLC - P.O. Box 208, Bedminster, PA 18910. We personally deliver within Bedminster Township.



Scene above is one of 5 scenes of preserved lands in Notecards for sale.

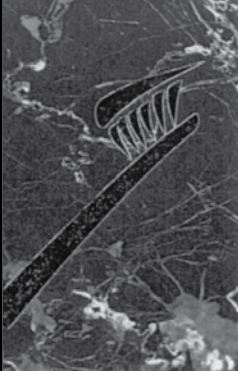


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* LEGISLATION & NEWS OF OUR REGION AND BEYOND *

The Bedminster Land Conservancy strives to keep our members aware of changing legislation as well as the availability of resources related to land preservation and conservation. It is important that our members also take time to express their thoughts to our politicians and stay aware of how they vote.

✍️ Barbara Drew

NATIONAL:

Carbon sequestration: This process allows carbon dioxide to be absorbed instead of released into the atmosphere where it would contribute to global warming. A test project to permanently inject 60,000 tons of carbon dioxide into a deep saline formation in Michigan is now well underway. A regional partnership, which includes Pennsylvania, is conducting the project. It will provide valuable understanding to guide emerging carbon capture and storage technology.

Farmland: According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the land being farmed dropped from 938,279,056 to 922,095,840 acres. This is a decrease of 16.2 million acres. But the census numbers do not measure farmland conversion. Based on census data, farmers and ranchers control 41 percent of the land area in the United States. For free information on farmland conversion and other farmland protection and stewardship issues, please contact the Farmland Information Center at 800-370-4879 x13 or www.farmland.org.

Federal Tax Incentive for Charitable Conservation Giving: Legislation is pending to make permanent the enhanced benefits for landowners who make conservation donations. (See article on page 13)

Water “Footprint”: Water-scarcity issues are increasingly in the news. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, about 36 states will face water shortages by 2013. Two-thirds of the world’s population will face water shortages by 2025, according to the United Nations. A water footprint is basically how much water is used to produce a given consumer item. The Wall Street Journal recently gave some examples of water use for production: it takes roughly 20 gallons of water to make a pint of beer, as much as 132 gallons of water to make a 2-liter bottle of soda and about 500 gallons of water, including water used to grow, dye and process cotton, to make a pair of Levi’s stonewashed jeans.

STATE:

Mining & Streams: A permit to PDG Development was recently denied by the Dept. of Environmental Protection; it would have allowed strip mining of Hays Woods, one of Pittsburgh’s largest and most intact green spaces. The developer had planned to dump rocks and other detritus in the valley, burying 8,000 feet of streams.

Organic Farming: PA has a new pilot program to assist farmers who wish to make the transition from conventional to organic agriculture. The program provides technical assistance and reimburses farmers for transition costs such as a temporary drop in yields as the soil recovers. Organic farming results in less pollution and soil runoff, healthier produce and keeps carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. For more information, contact the PA Dept. of Agriculture, www.agriculture.state.pa.us

BUCKS COUNTY & REGION:

Lower Makefield Township received the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award for its efforts to become more

environmentally conscientious. Since April 2007, the municipality adopted the Cool Cities Initiative, contracted for a detailed energy audit of all major township-owned facilities, which included an alternative energy solar proposal, and joined the Smart Power Program, which committed the township to using 20 percent alternative energy to meet its demands by 2010.

Carbon capture and sequestration (or storage) (CSS): This term refers to the technology designed to reduce the amount of global warming gas pollution that coal-fired power plants make. We rely on coal to generate half of our electricity and China and India are increasing their use of coal. Our ability to successfully tame global warming hinges on a solution to reduce the huge amounts of global warming pollution coming out of these plants. To see an overview of a study that Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is doing to determine the potential to store carbon underground in Pennsylvania, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

Gas Extraction: A coalition of environmental and conservation organizations are urging the state’s elected officials to invest a portion of the proposed fee into parks, forests, watersheds, open space and other green infrastructure. Permits for natural gas extraction from the Marcellus Shale and could generate additional revenues for the Commonwealth

Birds & Global Warming: Nearly 60 percent of the 305 bird species in North America are spending the winter 35 miles further north on average than they did 40 years ago, according to the National Audubon Society. Scientists believe global warming is the likely culprit. January temperatures in the U.S. have warmed about five degrees over the forty-year period.

Composting: The Guzikowski Farm, Lower Makefield, received state grant funds for composting equipment to enable the farm to accept 5,000 cubic yards of leaf and yard waste and 500 tons of food waste from local communities. The resulting compost product will be used to grow vegetable crops that will be sold directly to local consumers.

Roughly one-third of the municipal waste generated in Pennsylvania is organic material. By composting organic waste instead of burying it in landfills, PA can free up additional waste disposal space, save money by cutting down on municipal disposal fees, and generate additional business opportunities by creating various nutrient-rich soil additives. Finished compost adds nutrients to soil and increases moisture retention. The average homeowner can help reduce our reusable organic waste stream by creating compost that they can use in their own backyards.

Philadelphia Parks: Last November, the citizens of Philadelphia voted overwhelmingly in favor of amending the City Charter to create a new Department of Parks and Recreation and a new Commission. The new Commissioner is Michael DiBerardinis, formerly Secretary of the PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources. One of the first jobs of the new department is to adopt standards and guidelines for running and expanding the city’s parks, balancing protection of Philly’s parks with citizens’ use of the parks.

Support Pending Legislation: Federal Tax Incentive for Charitable Donations

Currently, federal tax incentives for conservation will expire at the end of December, 2009. Legislation is now pending in the House that would make the expanded benefits permanent for charitable donations of conservation easements.

This enhanced tax deduction for conservation easement donations has helped America's land trusts work with farmers, ranchers and other modest-income landowners to increase the pace of land conservation by at least 250,000 acres a year! But unless Congress acts, this important conservation tool will expire at the end of 2009 and benefits will revert to prior levels.

Since 2006, the federal tax benefits for gifts of conservation easements provide for a maximum federal tax deduction amount of 50% of a landowner's adjusted gross income (up from 30% before 2006). In addition, this deduction can be taken by the donor for up to 16 years instead of the 6 years previously allowed. A qualifying farmer - one who has a majority of income derived from farming - can deduct the donation value of up to 100% of their adjusted gross income.

The incentive also applies to partial donations or "bargain sales", where part of the easement value was purchased (for example, through the county or municipal preservation programs). As always, the IRS requires that the value of the conservation easement be established by a qualified, certified appraiser. Also, it is recommended that you consult a financial or tax advisor if you decide to proceed.

Your Opinion Is Important!

Please contact your federal and state representatives to make your concerns or support for legislative issues heard. Your voice is important. Your actions can make a difference in saving our communities.

Senator Arlen Specter, 600 Arch Street, Suite 9400
Philadelphia, PA 19106, 215-597-7200.
Email: SenatorSpecter@specter.senate.gov

Senator Robert Casey, 2000 Market St., Suite 1870
Philadelphia, PA 19103, 215-405-9660.
Email: www.casey.sen.gov

Congressman Patrick Murphy, 60 N. Main St.,
Doylestown, PA 18901, 215-348-7511.
Website www.patrickmurphy.house.gov

Senator Charles McIlhinney, 22 So. Main Street, Suite 220
Doylestown, PA 18901, 215-489-5000.
Email: CMcIlhinney@pa.sen.gov

Rep. Marguerite Quinn, 1032 N. Easton Road
Doylestown, PA 18901, 215-489-2126.
Email: MQuinn@pahousegop.gov

The Bedminster Land Conservancy (BLC) and like organizations working with the national Land Trust Alliance have advocated with our legislators for this tax advantage, highlighting the importance of land and natural resource conservation for the health and welfare of our communities. The BLC and other land trusts demonstrated that high standards were maintained for conservation easements placed during this "trial" time for the expanded incentive, helping to justify continuation of the tax deductions. We have all worked hard to demonstrate the validity of these permanent easements and their numerous benefits to the public, a factor which supports the tax deduction determination by the IRS.

H.R. bill 1831 is currently cosponsored by 202 Representatives, including Congressman Patrick Murphy. Senate bill 812 is cosponsored by 27 Senators. Let your legislators know you support this measure that would enable the increased pace of conservation and continue the enhanced benefits to landowners who donate the value of an easement.

If you have been considering preserving your land, contact the BLC to learn more about the process and IRS qualification standards. We will be happy to discuss this with you in more detail or answer any questions you may have about land preservation.

✍ Barbara Drew

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Koi pond with yellow iris, yellow koi and lilies and a heron watching over



Perennials were a showcase of pink, purple, yellow and white in the sunny hillside garden



At the Wolfe garden, BLC volunteers Harlan Howard, Bill Serani & Roger Witt helped with the sales of beautiful plants

The Schutt property featured a large outdoor railroad with trains, an idea borrowed from the Morris Arboretum's fabulous railroad display. Nearby, the koi pond and waterfall and the exotic passionflower provided enjoyment close-up, while a stocked pond with a paddleboat invoked lazy summer days. A view of preserved farmland offered another source of contemplative beauty. In addition, this property had a collection of rare specimen plants and trees as well as two bridges that crossed over a stream for the path through the woods. As one visitor noted, "It's amazing what treasures are hidden in your neighbor's backyard."

*✦ Christina Reisinger
for the Garden Tour Committee
photos by Barbara Drew*



The unusual passion flower vine, with its striking colors of blue and purple, could be viewed in the shade of the veranda on a patio.

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www.bedminsterlandconservancy.org

Welcome

We are pleased to welcome Ted Mullins to the Board of Directors. Ted has assisted with our newsletter and has served as easement monitor for several years, providing his thoughtful, experienced perspective to the landowner as well as to our other monitors. Ted has a hands-on appreciation for farming activities and is committed to land stewardship that respects the land and long term protection of natural resources. He explains that he learned in his youth "Enjoy using the land, but don't degrade it; instead, try and improve it." Recently retired as Vice-President from a major worldwide producer of consumer products (Unilever N.A. of NYC), Ted brings 32 years of business leadership and experience to the BLC. He and his wife Caroline have been supporters of the Bedminster Land Conservancy and residents of Bedminster for 5 years. Ted also is involved in other community activities.

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Thank you, Gib, for 12 years!

Gib Battisti, one of our founding members, has recently retired from the Board of Directors after serving for 12 years, since the conservancy's inception. Gib was instrumental in the formation of the conservancy and significant in developing the policies and procedures that led to our accreditation with the national Land Trust Alliance. Through all of those years, Gib served as a monitor, and oversaw the training of all the subsequent monitors. We don't know how many miles or acres of walking that represents, but it is a very significant contribution to the work of the conservancy! We are pleased that Gib will continue to support the conservancy by monitoring the easement properties and providing his stewardship expertise to landowners and other monitors.

✍ Board of Directors

Renew Your Membership Or Join Us for 2009!

Contributions are tax-deductible: the Bedminster Land Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Thank you for your support. You are helping us make a difference!

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If you would like to volunteer to help us, please note that on this form: Mailing committee, fund-raising, etc. If you are considering a conservation easement on your land or would like to speak with one of us for more information, check here . Please provide your phone number (above).





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Preserving the land ~ Protecting the future

The Conservator



NOTE:

In an effort to reduce use of paper, this will be our second and last newsletter for 2009. Our issues have expanded over the years and they are full of community news and educational information that we feel is important for our membership and easement landowners.

As always, you can visit our website

www.bedminsterlandconservancy.org

to view the archived newsletters.

A benefit is being able to view the photos in color!



The official registration and financial information of the Bedminster Land Conservancy may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999.

Registration does not imply endorsement.

Mission Statement

The goal and purpose of the Bedminster Land Conservancy is to function as a community-based land conservancy for the preservation of farmland and our agricultural heritage, as well as other open spaces, natural resources, wildlife habitats, and scenic features within Bedminster Township and other Bucks County municipalities. The main functions of this conservancy are to identify land of significance and resources for preservation; promote, accept, hold, and provide stewardship of conservation easements; provide information and function as a resource network for area residents and public agencies; sponsor educational preservation programs; conduct fund-raising activities; and work with other groups, corporations, and organizations with similar missions to promote and further the goal of this conservancy.