



december 2005 HIGHLANDS JOURNAL

newsletter of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy

Dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural heritage of the Upper Delaware River region in New York and Pennsylvania

GREAT NEWS FOR PIKE COUNTY

The Pike County Scenic and Rural Character Bond referendum passed with an overwhelming 68.2 % yes vote. The \$10 million in bond funds will be used to support planning throughout the county and to purchase and protect land.

Passing this bond is a significant step for Pike County. When implemented, the County and Municipalities will have the resources to identify and protect key areas. Eventually, thousands more acres will be protected in Pike County.

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy is proud of the educational work we did with the Alliance to Keep Pike Green these past two years.

With our support, the Alliance to Keep Pike Green was able to significantly raise awareness about the regions development pressures and explain some of the options available to address growth while protecting our quality of life. The Alliance presented to over fifty clubs, municipalities and organizations.

As a member of the Pike Conservation Partnership, the

Conservancy also jointly hosted a series of workshops providing in-depth information on some of the key planning and conservation tools available. (The Partnership won community recognition last month at the NEPA Awards.)

Through our work with the Alliance, the Conservancy has considerably 'expanded our contacts throughout the county. We look to build on this new awareness and spread the word even further about conservation options that exist to protect the landscape. It is an exciting time – both in Pike County and throughout the four county region we serve.

LOVE
WHERE
YOU
LIVE

Momentum in Sullivan County seems to be growing towards a potential referendum or other funding mechanism for open space protection. The challenges will be different in Sullivan but we hope to build on our experience, our growing knowledge, and our expanding list of partners as focus on conservation education there too.

AERIAL MONITORING

Rolin Edwards completes his flight log after helping the Conservancy monitor properties in Pike County. Barbara Yeaman and Don Downs accompanied Rolin and photographed ten sites either presently under conservation easement or under consideration for the future. It was a beautiful clear day. It is amazing how much you can see from the air. Even so, it took the concentration of both pilot and passengers to identify the landmarks necessary to locate the properties.



Delaware Highlands Conservancy

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Upcoming Meetings:

Board Meeting Dec. 10
Land Protection Jan. 14

SCOTT VAN GORDER OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

Scott's grandfather, Ralph, opened Van Gorder's Furniture in 1936. Following his father Don, Scott took over the business and now operates both Van Gorder furniture stores, one in downtown Honesdale and one at Lake Wallenpaupack. This third generation store, a Honesdale institution, specializes in rustic and casual furniture that compliments the lifestyle of the Delaware Highlands.

Both Scott and his wife, Beth, grew up in Honesdale. Two children, Max and Vanessa, both students at Wallenpaupack High School, live with their parents in Paupack, PA. Derek, the oldest child, graduated from Hamilton College this year and Dylan is a senior at the University of Colorado. With four athletic children, Scott devoted many years to coaching his children's athletic teams — baseball and especially ice hockey.



Scott is very enthusiastic about protecting the quality of life in the area and is a member in all three local Chambers of Commerce. His whole family appreciates and savors the natural beauty all around us here in the Upper Delaware region. We are pleased to have Scott on our board.

At our annual meeting in October, Scott VanGorder was elected to a three-year term as Director. Retiring board member Helle Henriksen was thanked for her service and will be missed (according to the Conservancy's by-laws, Directors must take a break after serving two consecutive three-year terms.) Last year's officers were re-elected to serve an additional term. Our accomplishments and financial status will be detailed in the Annual Report to be distributed in early 2006. We have had a busy year.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Magic of Maple Syrup 1:00 pm

Join us in March (date to be determined) for a visit to the Journey's End Farm to witness the transformation of sticky sap into golden maple syrup. This working farm is protected for future generations by a Conservation Easement with Delaware Highlands Conservancy. Syrup will be available for sale. Space is limited so please call the office at 570-226-3164 or email info@delawarehighlands.org to reserve your spot.

A GOOD NEIGHBOR

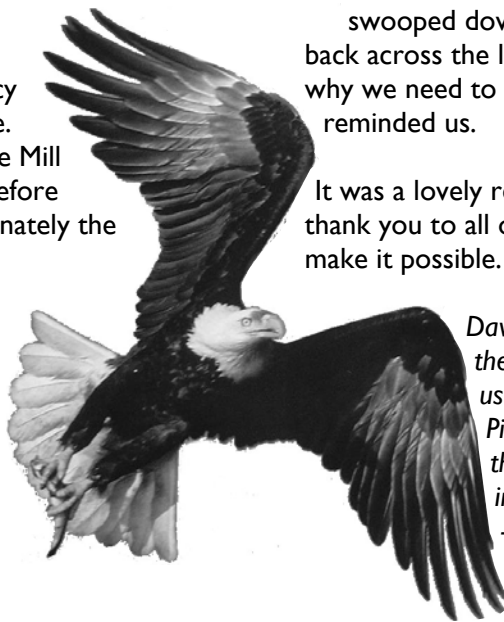
PPL graciously allows us use of the conference rooms in their Lake Wallenpaupack Environmental Education Center for our meetings and other educational programs. Thank you.

A LANDOWNER'S TALE

It wasn't about the fish.

David Schrenk called the Conservancy to share his recent fishing experience. He was out in a small rowboat on the Mill Pond fishing. It was about an hour before dusk. He caught a pickerel. Unfortunately the fish was injured by the catch, so when he released it back into the water, it did not survive and turned belly-up.

Almost immediately, a mature, glorious, bald eagle flew from across the lake to a tree close to where he was fishing. Thinking quickly, David rowed away from the floating fish.



When he was about 35 feet away, the eagle swooped down, grabbed the fish and flew off back across the lake. It was spectacular. "This is why we need to preserve these special places" he reminded us.

It was a lovely reminder. Thank you David. And thank you to all our members and supporters who make it possible.

David and his brother Mickey worked with the Conservancy to place an easement with us on their 500-acre property in southern Pike County. They are also members of the Mill Pond Association, a group of individuals who helped us protect the 500-acres surrounding the Mill Pond with an easement as well.

JOIN OUR MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

The Conservancy is conducting a membership campaign to increase our membership by 100 members by the end of the year. A significant goal that will help us do much more.

As with most non-profit organizations, members are the backbone of our organization. We depend on membership contributions to meet the costs of doing our work. We depend on our members to help spread our message. The strength of any organization also lies in the numbers of members it has behind it. The stronger our membership, the stronger our organization.

A Gift Membership for the Holidays and Beyond

This Holiday season give a Delaware Highlands Conservancy membership to your colleagues, friends, or loved ones. A membership is a present that keeps giving all year round. It is the perfect present for those who already "have everything" or for the many of us who have too much. And it is **tax deductible** for you, the giver.

Once the Holiday season is over use a gift membership as a present for:

- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Weddings
- Graduations
- Housewarmings
- In honor of someone or something

Every time you give a gift membership you give a gift in three ways: to the recipient, to the Conservancy, and to the entire Upper Delaware Region. Thank you!

OTHER WAYS TO HELP THE CONSERVANCY DO MORE

- Take advantage of matching donations. Some employers will match your donation to charitable organizations
- Include Delaware Highlands Conservancy in your will. This is a simple and effective way to support our work well into the future
- Donate appreciated securities. Avoid capital gains tax and maximize your income tax deduction

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

A conservation easement can also be called a land preservation agreement. It is a legal agreement between a willing landowner and a land trust. As a land preservation agreement, it permanently protects the important conservation values of a property usually by limiting future development although other restrictions may be included. Every agreement is unique and tailored to the landowner's goals and the property's characteristics.

Once the agreement is signed, it is recorded in the courthouse as a deed of conservation easement. The landowner continues to own the land, pay property taxes, and manage the land – subject to the restrictions detailed in the agreement. The land does not need to be open to public access. The landowner can sell the property or transfer it to their heirs at any time. Each subsequent landowner is bound by the same terms that the original landowner put in place. It is the land trust's responsibility to ensure that all future owners of the property abide by the terms of the conservation easement. The Conservancy does this with annual monitoring visits – either meeting with the landowners in person or by flying over the property. The land trust also has the ability and the responsibility to enforce the terms of the easement and take legal action if necessary to uphold those terms.

Landowners enter into these agreements for one primary reason: to ensure that the land they love remains as it is for future generations. By taking this action, they make a significant gift to the community. The community benefits from the protected scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, clean water or even from the produce of the working farms and forests.

The Internal Revenue Service recognizes the incredible value of the gift and provides some financial incentives for landowners who donate easements (place conservation easements on their properties without seeking full monetary compensation.) The landowner may benefit from a reduction in federal income tax and estate tax.

To learn more, please contact the office at 570-226-3164.

An example:

Jane owns a vacant 100-acre parcel that under current zoning rules could be divided into 20 five-acre residential lots. The current fair market value for her property is \$400,000. Jane places an Easement on the property that allows for only two homes and the rest will remain undeveloped. With the restrictions of the easement, Jane's property is now appraised with a potential market value of \$250,000. The difference between the market value of the property before and after the conservation easement (in this case: \$400,000-\$250,000 = \$150,000) is the value of the conservation easement.

The property's value before

Minus

The property's value with the Conservation Easement

Equals

The value of the Conservation Easement

Subject to certain IRS restrictions, Jane can claim this amount an income tax deduction up to 30% of her adjusted gross income. Any unused portion can be carried over for five more years. Conservation easements can also yield significant estate tax benefits, helping to keep the land in the family.

IMPORTANT TAX BILL UNDER CONSIDERATION

A tax bill that includes a significant expansion of deductions available to landowners who donate a conservation easement to a land trust has been passed by the Senate and is under consideration by the House. The Senate bill extends the carry-forward period for tax deductions for conservation easements from five to fifteen years and also increases the deductions available for working farms. If passed this bill will greatly encourage conservation in the Upper Delaware River region.



HONORARY DIRECTOR

Ken Knapp was recently made an Honorary Director in recognition of his continued support and promotion of the Conservancy. Ken placed his historic house, agricultural fields, and woodlands in a conservation easement held by Delaware Highlands Conservancy, protecting his property from future subdivision and development. His land stretches for almost a mile along the beautiful West Branch of the Delaware in Delhi, Delaware County, NY.

MEADOW PARTY RECAP

Our 9th Annual Meadow Party on Saturday September 17 was the best ever.



Barbara performs on her harp

Musical guests included acclaimed folk singer **Janet Burgan**, **Bill Engel** on the hammered Dulcimer, and **Barbara Kaighn** and **Barbara Yeaman** on harps.

Renowned author **Malachy McCourt** entertained one and all with his reflections on life. Wildlife presenter

Bill Cutler, an amateur herpetologist, brought live native snakes and amphibians. **Jen Naugle**, Promised Land State Park Naturalist, spoke about local mammals. **Daryl Speicher**, from the Pocono Avian Research Center, demonstrated banding birds for research. **Don Hamilton**, armed with a tank of aquatic life from the Delaware River, told of the diversity in the river. Local children's author and illustrator **Lindsay Barrett George** read from her books, and **Sharon and Cassie Rutledge** ran a busy kid's craft area.

The food was delicious. Again this year many restaurants and grocers generously donated to our food buffet. Maps showing the location of our contributors are still available, call the office to get your extra copies. We thank ALL the vendors who participated in the Delaware Delights awards, and donated a dish to the Meadow Party. Please join us in thanking the following participants the next time you go out to dine or shop:

1850 Bistro, Angelo's Bakery, **Beach Lake Bread (best bread)**, **Busters BBQ (best main dish)**, Café Déjà Vu, Dave's Super Duper, Day's Bakery, Ehrhardt's Lakeside Restaurant, Elegante Restaurant, Ernie's Place, Fallsdale Farm, Jill's Kitchen, Just Rumors, Lake Region Super Market, Lander's River Café, Laurel's Café, Matthew's on Main, McCaffery's Market, Nature's Grace, Our Place on the Lake, Peck's Market, **Stella's (tied best side dish)**, **Suzanne Crum Catering (tied best side dish)**, The 1906 Restaurant, The Central House, **The Eldred Inn (best dessert)**, The Inn at Starlight Lake, The Settlers Inn, The Whistle Stop, Tick Tocks, Torte Knox, and Weis Markets. Special thanks to Grant Genzlinger of the Settler's Inn for coordinating the buffet. Thanks also to Marcia Dunsmore and Ken Crum for their help with setting up a fabulous display of dishes.

The silent auction was also a success thanks to the numerous donors: Altec Lansing, Arts for Men, Beach Lake Café, Caesars Pocono Resorts, Cochection Mills, Decorator Showcase, Delaware Valley Farm & Garden, Dimmick Inn Steakhouse, Durlam Brothers, Eagle Institute, Fireside Inn, Fluff's Deli, Gumble Brothers, Halfway House Restaurant, Hazzard's Raintree, Highlights for Children, Jill's Kitchen, Kole's Aerobic & Fitness, Kost Tire and Muffler, Milanville General Store, P.J.'s Garden Center, Pro Jan, The River Reporter, Sprig and Twig, Watson Brothers, Woodloch Pines Resort, Don and Edie Downs, Don Hamilton, Reuel and Barbara Kaighn, Roy Morsch, Maggie Niles, Diane Townsend, Cindy and Robin Wildermuth, and Sigrid Wilshinsky.



Clint Rodell talks about fly fishing

We also give a very special thanks to our two premiere sponsors: **The Dime Bank** and **William R. Henkelman** (Real Estate/Appraisals).

The Conservancy thanks everyone, who in various ways, made the day a success including the **River Reporter** with their sponsorship of our schedule of events and the **Narrowsburg Chamber** for the loan of tents. Thanks also to **David B. Soete**, the Meadow Party's Official Photographer. Plus we give a Gigantic Thank YOU to all our dedicated volunteers.



Sabrina Artel, host of Trailer Talk on WJFF, chats with Sue Currier and Barbara Yeaman.

DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY MEMBERSHIP FORM

☐ **YES!** I want to conserve natural open space and support the Conservancy with my tax-deductible membership donation of:

☐ \$35-\$59 Friend; ☐ \$60-\$99 Supporter; ☐ \$100-\$249 Protector; ☐ \$250-\$499 Sustainer; ☐ \$500 Conservator; ☐ Other

NAME: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

PHONE _____ **EMAIL:** _____

☐ My check made payable to Delaware Highlands Conservancy is enclosed

☐ I prefer to pay by credit card: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa Amount: \$ _____

Account #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____ Phone #: _____

Mail this form and donation payment to: **Delaware Highlands Conservancy, P.O. Box 218, Hawley, PA 18428-0218**

Delaware Highlands Conservancy is a tax-exempt organization as provided by IRS regulations. The official registration and financial information of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Brannigan family, Kim Cacho and John Lyon, William Engle, Robert and Mary Haughey, Charles Laven, Barbara R. Lewis, Alison MacFarlane, Dan and Krissy Nalesnik, Scott Van Gorder, Robert Wuesthoff and Thomas Zeterberg.

WISH LIST

- Folding tables (for programs)
- Filing cabinets
- Bulletin Board
- AA rechargeable batteries (for GPS and camera)
- Access database knowledgeable programmer as resource for work in the office

AND THANK OUR RENEWING MEMBERS

Our work is possible only with your continued support.

DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY



At the Meadow Party

serving New York and Pennsylvania
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