



august 2006 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

LENAPE RISING NATION RIVER JOURNEY

It takes tremendous community support to make it through an ordeal, explained Jim Beer, Lenape Nation Tribal Spokesperson. The ordeal: a ceremonial 14 day river trip from Hancock, NY to Pennsbury Manor, PA (the former estate of William Penn in Bucks County near Trenton, NJ). The boy scouts and others undertake such rights of passage to test their skills or their faith. The mission of the River Journey is to bring like-minded groups and communities together, to form partnerships to accomplish common goals of protecting the natural resources of the Delaware River region, and to acknowledge our role as caretakers of the land 'keeping in mind what is in the best interest of the next seven generations'.

In August 2002 the first River Journey was completed. This year, the Conservancy along with other groups supported the Nation's second trip, providing food and camping facilities. At the end of the trip, the Lenape Nation and a number of supporting

organizations signed a Treaty pledging to work together in support of the Lenape culture, as well as their conservation ethic, language, and way of life. With the signing of the Treaty of Renewed Brotherhood, the Conservancy looks forward to further enhancing our relationship with the Delaware Lenape people.

The Conservancy currently holds the conservation easement on property now owned by the Lenape. Jane Quick, who believes that her grandmother had Lenape blood, decided to entrust her preserved land, Westfall Marsh, to the Lenape last year.



Dr. Ann Rhoads identifies sedges on the Lenape's Westfall Marsh Farm

(Continued on page 5)

BREAKING NEWS: INCREASED EASEMENT TAX SAVINGS

With the approval of the Pensions bill on August 17, exciting new incentives were written into law for Conservation Easement donors. Specifically the law raises the IRS deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from **30%** of their **adjusted gross income** in any year to **50%**; allows **qualifying farmers** to deduct up to **100% of their income**; and **extends the carry-forward period** for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation easement from 5 to **15 years**. (first year + 15 = a total of 16 years)

Unfortunately the new law only applies to easements donated in **2006 and 2007**. The combination of these new benefits with recent Property Tax incentives for New York properties may make for a busy 18 months!

Delaware Highlands Conservancy

Officers:

Carson Helfrich, President
Lothar Holbert, Vice President
Gail Lowden, Treasurer
Don Downs, Secretary

Board Members:

Greg Belcamino
Krista Gromalski
Jeffrey Moore
Peter Pinchot
Adam Rodell
Clint Rodell
Cindy Wildermuth
Scott VanGorder
Barbara Yeaman

Executive Director:

Sue Currier

Land Protection

Coordinator:

Helle Hendricksen

Editor: Don Downs

Ex Officio: Grant Genzlinger

P.O. Box 218

Hawley, PA 18428-0218

P.O. Box 219

Narrowsburg, NY 12764

phone 570-226-3164

fax 570-226-3166

www.delawarehighlands.org

info@delawarehighlands.org

Upcoming Meetings:

Annual Meeting Oct. 21

Land Protection Nov. 9

KRISTA GROMALSKI: NEW BOARD MEMBER



Krista Gromalski is a welcome addition to the Conservancy's Board of Directors. She has worked for more than a decade in the public relations, publishing and journalism fields, most recently as Editor and Publisher of *Milford Magazine*. This year Krista co-founded Heron's Eye Communications, LLC with Sandy Long. Krista was Campaign Manager for the successful Vote to Keep Pike Green initiative in support of the Scenic Rural Character Preservation Bond that will raise \$10 million over the next decade for Pike's land-use planning and preservation. She has served on the Pike County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and is a Board Member of the Black Bear Film Festival and North American Cultural Laboratory (NaCl) Theatre.

Krista is currently working on the public television documentary *Nature's Keepers*. The film will focus on Pike County's conservation legacy and how it is continuing today through the activism of citizens who are striving to be the example other rapidly growing communities look to for leadership on land stewardship issues (see article below).

"The work of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy is vital during this time of rapid growth and development in the Upper Delaware region. We would be facing a very different future without its educational outreach efforts and visionary conservation leadership." Welcome Krista!

NATURE'S KEEPERS

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy is the sponsor of the public television documentary *Nature's Keepers*. Filming this summer and early-fall in Pike County, it is a project that will further advance the conservation agenda for our region. *Nature's Keepers* will air on more than 150 public television stations. *Nature's Keepers* is about Pike County's leadership on land stewardship and smart growth issues. It will focus on the people of Pike County who are working to educate and mobilize their community toward action on behalf of the land and the place they love.

Nature's Keepers is funded by private donations. All gifts are 100% tax deductible. Checks can be made payable to *Nature's Keepers* and mailed directly to The Delaware Highlands Conservancy, at: PO Box 218, Hawley, PA 18428. Gifts of \$250 or more will be acknowledged in the film's credits.



Barbara Yeaman on camera.



10TH ANNUAL MEADOW PARTY

Join us for our **10th Annual Meadow Party**, on the shores of the Delaware River near Milanville, PA, on Saturday, **September 16** from **noon until 5:00 pm**.

This year the Meadow Party promises fun for all ages with live music, contra dancing, wildlife presentations, kids' activities, horse and buggy rides, environmental exhibits, a silent auction and more. Bring your friends and family and help us celebrate. Admission is free. All money raised from the day's activities will help support the Conservancy's work.

Sounds and words of the Upper Delaware will abound with a variety of short performances including: readings, poetry and skits by the **Writers' Guild**, musician **Bill Engel** on the hammered dulcimer, **Jeff Moore** on the dulcimer, **Barbara Yeaman and Jan Hirsch** with their harps and **Sandy and Amy Long** on guitar. This year's main act, the **Biodiesel String Band** with Dan and Roger Brinkerhoff, Kurt Knuth, and Aldo Troiani, will lead the lively Contra dancing at **3 pm**.

At **1 pm** **Don Hamilton** of the **National Park Service** will discuss the diversity of local aquatic life illustrated with a tank of live specimens from the Delaware River. Then he will lead a River Walk. Bring your old shoes for this one. At **2 pm** the **Pocono Wildlife Rehabilitation Center's Kathy Dubin-Uhler** will demonstrate wildlife first-aid, safe handling, and rehabilitation with live animals including owls and hawks.

Activities for children include story reading, a kids' craft tent, a puppet theatre, bird house building, and more.

Throughout the day local environmental groups will display information about their own missions. Representatives from the Alliance to Keep Pike Green, the Eagle Institute, the Lacawac Sanctuary, the Lackawaxen River Conservancy, the National Park Service, the Northeast PA Audubon Society, the Pocono Avian Research Center, Stop NYRI, Trout Unlimited, the Upper Delaware Visioning Committee, and more are expected.

Then there is the wonderful food. Each year local restaurants and grocers generously donate a dish or two to our famed food buffet. This is a rare opportunity to sample the best dishes of many local restaurants and pick up a map to direct you to their dining locations. The suggested donation for the food buffet is \$10.00 per Adult, \$3.00 per child.

At 4 pm we will draw the winners of our Annual Kayak Raffle. Alice's Wonderland in Greely PA donated a sparkling yellow/orange Necky "Sky" kayak for the first prize. Second Prize is a 3-room Texport dome tent, and a \$50 gift certificate for Alice's Wonderland is the third raffle prize. Proceeds from the silent auction, the kayak raffle, and the food buffet go directly to the Conservancy's conservation efforts in this region.

Congratulations to Kathy Dodge and Pete Snyder of Lake Ariel, PA, the winners of a framed photo by Dave Soete in the Early Bird draw.



CONSERVING WILDLIFE HABITAT IN DAMASCUS

By Barbara Yeaman

At one time in her life Wendy Burnett dreamed of becoming a wildlife rehabilitator. Instead, she created a wildlife refuge, and, working with the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, in 2005 she signed a conservation easement that will ensure its future.

Purchased in 1988, the original 10 acres (a portion of an old dairy farm homestead) grew to 75 acres in 1992 when she purchased 65 additional acres of surrounding land.

Wendy worked with State Forester Jack Gearhart to develop a Forest Stewardship plan aimed at improving habitat for wildlife. Following that plan, Wendy (a slight woman) planted winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, and black and speckled alder, *Alnus glutinosa* and *Alnus incana*, for “Timber Doodle” (woodcock) food and cover. Working alone she installed ten circular deer exclosures, each constructed with 100 feet of 5 foot-high fencing that will permit the regeneration of native plants normally eaten by the white-tailed deer. She also planted many trees for wildlife cover and food including white spruce *Picea glauca*, crabapples *Malus pumila*, and Japanese larch *Larix kaempferi*. Guided by her approved Stewardship plan she became eligible for a State cost-share for the purchase of the planting materials.



Unfortunately, a tornado ripped through her forest and fields in August of 2005 and her land sustained extensive damage that will take years to heal. The storm hit just one month before her planned wedding to fellow New Yorker and Damascus Township neighbor, Mike Uretsky.

This was not the first time she has made a life plan readjustment.

As they tell the story, Wendy and Mike first met at the Damascus recycling dump. Their trash must have been very compatible, because one thing led to another and they were married in October of 2005. Compatible trash or not, they certainly had compatible interests. Two months after the wedding, Wendy signed a conservation easement that would forever protect her 75 acres. Now she and Mike are talking to all their neighbors about the easement: how it reads; what it will do; what it means to the community; and encouraging the neighbors to follow Wendy's example.

What this all means is that Wendy has given up the right to subdivide or develop her land beyond the terms of the easement. Her easement only permits two additional residences to be built sometime in the future, each within a two 2-acre building envelope.

Three years ago Wendy faced major surgery. Always mindful of her property, and unsure of what the outcome of the surgery might be, she drafted a will that directed the future care of her land. Thankfully, the surgery was successful. Later, after Wendy heard our Conservancy's director Sue Currier speak about conservation easements at a Forest Landowners meeting, Wendy hired an attorney to help her draft her own conservation easement.

From start to finish, her easement took just four months. She gives full credit to her attorney Tony Waldron and our Executive Director Sue Currier, for enabling her to close before the end of the year. “The whole effort was so positive, and in sync with my theories of preserving the land,” Wendy told Barbara Yeaman. “My easement does two things: it protects the environment and it protects my property and our community's values. It just makes good sense (both economic and environmental) for individual property owners. If developers come in and subdivide we all would lose. By protecting your land you're protecting your whole neighborhood.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept 21 Groundwater Protection 7:00pm, PPL Environmental Learning Center

Interested in learning how to protect your drinking water supply? Join John Jose, Watershed Specialist with the Pike County Conservation District and Carson Helfrich of Community Planning and Management to learn how we can protect our vital groundwater supplies. For more information on this Pike Conservation Partnership Program, call 570-226-8220.

Sept 22 Autumn Skies Star Watch 8:00pm, Butterfly Barn Rain Date: Saturday Sept 23

Local astronomers will share their telescopes and sky charts. Observe deep sky objects and how to locate the constellations. This program will last about two hours. Bring binoculars and folding chairs if you have them and dress for cool weather.

Sept 27 Benefits of the Official Map, 7:00pm PPL Environmental Learning Center.

Learn how municipalities can best use a powerful land use management tool: the Official Map. Dave Albright, Planning Director from Chestnut Hill, PA will address the implementation process. Planner Carson Helfrich will address applications in Pike and Wayne Counties. Jack Hines will discuss the tremendous success achieved in the Downingtown, PA.

Oct 1 Earth Day in Autumn in Bethel, NY

Stop by the Delaware Highlands Conservancy booth at the Earth Day in Autumn Festival in Bethel

Performing Arts Center, site of the famous Woodstock Festival.

Oct 7 Exploring the Autumn Forest 10:00am, meet at Butterfly Barn

Join naturalist Ed Wesely on an autumn walk to discover how plants and animals prepare for winter.

Oct 21 Annual General Meeting 10:00am, PPL Environmental Learning Center

We invite all Delaware Highlands Conservancy members to attend our Annual General Meeting. This is an excellent opportunity to hear about our progress; to vote for members of the Board of Directors; to ask questions of the Treasurer; to learn about our future plans; and to meet your fellow members.

Oct 26 Growing Greener: Conservation by Design 4:30 – 9:00 pm, PPL Learning Center

Ann Hutchinson, Senior Director, Municipal Conservation Services, from the Natural Land Trust, will lead an informative workshop that helps municipalities balance conservation and development objectives. The workshop has a dinner meeting format to include a slide presentation, questions and discussion, and design exercise that involves participants in designing their own conservation subdivision. There is a cost of \$20 for dinner and materials for this program.

Please check the website at
www.delawarehighlands.org for updates
or call the Conservancy at
570-226-3164.

LENAPE NATION (Continued from page 1)

Speaking on behalf of the Nation, Jim expressed how pleased they were to become the caretakers of the property so loved by Jane. They had been searching for a place to gather, celebrate their culture and practice good stewardship. They have lots of wonderful ideas for the property, but gambling is definitely not in the mix. They are not in favor of gambling and it wouldn't be allowed under the terms of the easement anyway. They will focus on organic farming and education, and have already begun work to clean up the old farmhouse in anticipation of next year's farming activities.

During each Treaty signing ceremony, the sacred Lenape Wampum is entrusted to a privileged partner for the next four years. Sue Currier, the Conservancy's Executive Director was surprised and honored to be selected as the protector of the Wampum. "I truly look forward to working with Jim and the others on educational programs at the farm and throughout the region", said Sue. Sue's now shopping for a new kayak and is eager to start practicing so she can join the river trip in 2010.

The Lenape people are the original inhabitants of Delaware, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania and southern New York. For 10,000 years they have been the caretakers of these lands along the Delaware River. To learn more about the Lenape visit www.lenapenation.org or watch for information about the 9th Annual Lenape Nation Pow-Wow at Bingham Park in Hawley on September 23 and 24, 2006. All proceeds from the event will benefit Lenape Nation educational and agricultural programs.

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:

Caryl Razler, Alex and Deborah Cojocar, Myron Krenitsky, Charles and Sandra Verga, Astrid Kromayer, Mary Ellen Sutherland, Susan and Earl Lory, Jim and Joanne Dearlove, and Gary and Shary Skoloff

WISH LIST:

- Rechargeable AA batteries for our monitoring equipment.
- A volunteer with HTML experience to help update our web sites.

MEADOW PARTY HELP NEEDED

Tax deductible Silent Auction Donations will help us raise funds for our work. Food Donations from local restaurants and grocers fuel our fabulous food buffet. Volunteers help with set up and clean up on September 16th. Call 570-226-3164 if you can help just like Bob.



DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

serving New York and Pennsylvania
P.O. Box 218 Hawley, PA 18428-0218



*Tamanend, a young Lenape,
sets out on an epic River Journey*

Non-Profit Org.
Hawley, PA
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 42