



DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

PROTECTING QUALITY
OF LIFE IN THE
UPPER
DELAWARE
RIVER REGION

The Delaware Highlands Conservancy is a land trust dedicated to working with landowners, other conservation organizations, and local governments to conserve the natural and cultural heritage of the Upper Delaware River region: Wayne and Pike counties in Pennsylvania and Sullivan and Delaware Counties in New York.

In 2007, our full-time staff consisted of Executive Director, Sue Currier and Land Protection Specialist, Helle Henriksen. To help with our increasing workload throughout the year, we hired part-time, short-term staff members whose assistance ran the gamut from office work to fieldwork. Still, the Conservancy remains a predominately a volunteer organization. We rely on active board members and numerous volunteers to run our programs, work with landowners, and monitor the easements we hold. Our volunteers keep the books, paint the walls, write thank-you notes, monitor easements and lead our outreach activities – they're valuable assets to our dedicated team.

The Conservancy has had a truly productive year. Our accomplishments are only possible through the support of our members, donors, and volunteers. Thank you.

In February, we moved our office to 508 River Street in Hawley, PA. Henry Skier generously offered the Conservancy reduced rent in a building he no longer needed. Our volunteers went to work on the new place. As a result of their generous efforts, the Conservancy and AM Skier Insurance won the Historic Preservation Award for exterior restoration and adapted reuse. If you are in the area, please stop by and see our wonderful place - including a fireplace built with blue glass pieces from glass

factories that once populated the area along the Lackawaxen River.

In 2007, we welcomed new board members, **Mike Uretsky, Denise Frangipane, and Don Downs** bringing our Board to twelve. In October, Carson Helfrich reached his term limit and stepped down as President, and we welcomed Grant Genzlinger to the role.

With your help, we achieved our goal of protecting 10,000 acres by the end of 2007.

In 1999, we had protected only 1000 acres, and the goal of 10,000 acres by 2007 seemed a herculean task. The remarkable – and exciting – achievement of this ambitious goal is a testament to the number of landowners who love their land and want to see it protected as well to everyone who supports the Conservancy. Thank you!

With the addition of eight easements this year, we have a total of 47 different properties protected. Although our primary area of focus remains the four counties of the Upper Delaware, some of the lands we protect now spill into the adjacent counties of Monroe and Susquehanna in Pennsylvania and Broome County New York.

And it doesn't end here. Both sides of the Upper Delaware River are experiencing increasingly intense growth pressure. In response, the Conservancy has set a new goal – to protect another 10,000 acres.

The number of inquiries remains high. This year alone we have had **over 80 new contacts from landowners**. Currently, we are working on 18 easements with the



potential to close in 2008 – which would break another record for the Conservancy.

In 2007 we also worked with various federal, state, and local agencies to seek funding to further encourage land-owners to protect their land by offering compensation for placing easements on their property.

As official sponsors for the Forest Legacy Program in both Wayne and Pike Counties in PA, we submitted applications for federal funds for over 4,500 acres. Although we did not receive easement funding in 2007- we will apply again in 2008 . We were also awarded a contract to complete a guidebook for other land trusts working with the federal government.

We received awards for grant funds restricted to the purchase of easements.

Money awarded through the United States Fish and Wildlife Landowner Incentive Program administered by the Pennsylvania Fish and Game Commission will help us protect 700 acres of wildlife habitat for species of special concern.

We were awarded funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to purchase an easement on 440 acres of the Camp Speers-Eljabar property that is listed as needing protection on the Pike Natural Areas Inventory and is adjacent to State lands. We also submitted a grant application to protect an 800 acre hunt club - which would be the first hunt club in the region protected with DCNR funds.

We are working with the Sullivan County Planning office and the Open Space Institute to use NY Farmland

Protection Implementation Grant funds to protect a working dairy farm in Sullivan County.

To better serve the region in 2008, the Conservancy is expanding its efforts in New York.

The Sullivan County Legislature has contributed the office space where the Conservancy will be co-located with the Planning Office. Our expansion in New York and cooperative efforts with the Sullivan County Planning Office provides an exciting opportunity for us to protect more land in New York.

Our educational programs promote good stewardship across the region. In cooperation with the Pike Conservation Partnership, we completed a second year of educational outreach for the Alliance to Keep Pike Green providing information and workshops on conservation topics.

We hosted a series of informative events including talks on the benefits of land conservation and “Bringing Back the American Chestnut” and activities like wildflower and bird walks, canoe trips, hikes, and star watches with local astronomers. As part of our Butterfly Barn activity, Ed Wesely spoke about the Monarch Butterfly life cycle and demonstrated the tagging of early butterfly migrants.

Working with the Pike Planning office, we provided support for the Scenic Rural Character Preservation Board’s administration of Bond funds. We signed a one year contract with Pike County to do planning with municipalities. In addition, we are currently providing support to the newly formed Pike County Agricultural Preservation Board.



Along with other organizations and all levels of government in this area, we continue to oppose the NY Regional Interconnect (NYRI) power transmission line that threatens the Upper Delaware Wild and Scenic River. Construction of this power line would forever change this river valley.

Cassilyn Schweighofer received our annual Conservancy-Barbara Yeaman Scholarship.

Cassilyn, a graduate of Honesdale High School now studies Agricultural Science at Cornell University.

We continued work with the local Lena'pe Tri-Unity Coalition in support of conservation education and sustainable agriculture goals for their 100 acre farm upon which we hold an easement. We sponsored workdays on the farm to upgrade the facilities and blaze trails for educational programs.

The Conservancy is the sponsor of the public television documentary “Nature’s Keepers” that 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. A “director’s cut” was shown at a gala banquet in March and finally completed at year end. We expect it to air on local PBS stations in 2008.

This years Meadow Party was a great success, even without our traditional food extravaganza. While the focus of the event is a celebration of our land protection work, the proceeds of our raffle and auction are welcome. Thank you to our many sponsors including: Dime Bank,



Heinemann Real Estate and Waste Management, Alice’s Wonderland and the many people who donated items.

You make it all possible. Thank you.

2007 was an amazing year for the Conservancy – a local land trust working with a limited budget. WE are extremely proud to share all our positive news with you, our volunteers, donors, and supporters. Protecting land requires sustained effort and dedicated team work. We thank you for all you do!

Officers

Grant Genzlinger, Pres
Don Downs, VP
Scott VanGorder, Sec
Gail Lowden, Treasurer

Board Members

Greg Belcamino
Denise Frangipane
Krista Gromalski
Jeffrey Moore
Mike Uretsky
Cindy Wildermuth
Sigrid Wilshinsky
Barbara Yeaman

Retiring Board

Members (as of Oct '07)
Carson Helfrich

Executive Director

Sue Currier

Land Protection Coordinator

Helle Henriksen

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