

UPCOMING EVENTS

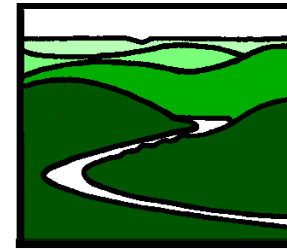
JUNE 13 - Canoe Trip

JUNE 15 - PSU Ext "Home Water Well Testing in the Gas Well Era"
Call 570-253-0930 for reservations and more info.

JUNE 26 - Botany Walk & Open House, Westfall Twsp., Pike County

AUG 7 & 8 - Festival of Wood at Grey Towers & Woodland Owner
Education Programs

SEPT 25 - Deer Management Program, Promised Land State Park



HIGHLANDS LAND LINES

Spring 2010

A Guide to the Stewardship of Protected Lands
with the Delaware Highlands Conservancy

Wetlands, Mother Nature's Underappreciated Workhorse

Nick Spinelli, Watershed Specialist, Pike County Conservation District

During the European exploration of the early 1600's, the landmass that would become known at the "Lower 48" contained an estimated 221 million acres of wetlands. Today there are fewer than 100 million acres remaining. Why such a drastic change? As European colonization expanded throughout the New World, thousands of acres of wetlands were drained for agricultural purposes. Thousands more were drained for the "health" of settlers. In 1763, one of our great founding fathers, President George Washington, helped create the Dismal Swamp Land Company singlehandedly draining 40,000 acres of the Great Dismal Swamp on the Georgia/North Carolina border. In those days, and even as recently as the 1970's, wetlands were thought to breed disease carrying insects, harbor insidious creatures, and be generally useless to development. Unfortunately, the trend of wetland loss continues, albeit at a much slower rate than in the past.



Fortunately, American intuition wasn't lost in the Great Dismal Swamp and we've made great strides to come full circle in our view of wetlands. Today we're well aware of the countless benefits and integral role wetlands play in ecosystem functioning. We know that wetlands enhance water quality, process and store storm water, help control and slow flood waters, provide habitat for many species of plants and animals, and add value to our recreation and tourism based economy. Despite this awareness, the United States still loses thousands of wetland acres annually at a cost much greater than that quantified through dollars and cents.

The very attributes which once caused humans to drain wetlands are actually some of the most valuable. The algae, bacteria, and vegetation associated with a wetlands' "rotten egg"

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

DELAWARE HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

Non-Profit Org.
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The Delaware Highlands Conservancy is a land trust dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural heritage of the Upper Delaware River region.

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Highlands Landlines is a semi-annual newsletter created by the Conservancy for landowners who have a conservation easement with the Conservancy.

This publication is also available electronically.



What is Highlands Land Lines?

You probably already receive the Delaware Highlands Conservancy’s regular newsletter, *Highlands Journal*. Our newsletter is distributed to all of our landowners, members and other like-minded folks who are interested in what the Conservancy is doing three times a year.

This publication, *Highlands Land Lines*, has already been coming to you twice per year and is completely dedicated to providing you, as a landowner with a conservation easement through the Conservancy, with useful tips for the stewardship of your land.

So what’s new in this issue?

- A new size and format!
- Updates about staff and who to contact in the office with your questions
- Articles and questionnaires related to topics you as landowners have asked the Conservancy about

We’d be interested in your ideas for future articles, features or just comments on the publication in general. Please, tell us what you think!

We need your Email Address!

The Conservancy, like so many other conservation minded organizations, is hoping to conserve funds and resources by communicating with its landowners and members through e-mail.

Please send your email to info@delawarehighlands.org and specify if you would like to receive our mailings electronically or continue to receive hard copies in the mail.

Pre-Monitoring Visit Questionnaire

Please help the Conservancy in our annual monitoring visits by completing the below survey and mailing to:
Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Attn: Stewardship Coordinator
PO Box 218
Hawley, PA 18428

Annual monitoring allows the Conservancy to uphold the terms of the conservation easement for each property. Monitoring allows the Conservancy to determine whether the conservation values outlined in the conservation easement are intact. In addition, monitoring is a fundamental part of relationship building between the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, its members and landowners.

Do you have plans to sell, subdivide or lease the property?.....	Yes	No
Have any structures (houses, sheds, barns, gazebos, garage, pole barn) been built or replaced within the boundaries of the conservation easement?.....	Yes	No
Has there been any land disturbance as a result of road/trail construction, digging/ filling, planting, fencing or other construction?.....	Yes	No
Has the protected property been affected by any of the following:		
Insect damage.....	Yes	No
Storm damage.....	Yes	No
Fire.....	Yes	No
Vandalism; trespassing, dumping, operation of ATVs or other motorized vehicles....	Yes	No
Property line violations from neighboring parcels.....	Yes	No
Has there been any timbering on the property?.....	Yes	No
If so, was the timbering a result of a recommendation by a current Forest Management Plan?.....	Yes	No
Have you noticed any of the following affecting wetlands or waterways on the property?		
Encroachment of invasive vegetation or animals.....	Yes	No
Change in flow, quality or quantity of water	Yes	No
Livestock in or near waterways or wetlands.....	Yes	No
Erosion along banks or channels.....	Yes	No
Have you signed a lease for use of the land? (ie. gas lease, agricultural).....	Yes	No
Have you noticed new populations or an increase in existing populations of invasive vegetation?.....	Yes	No

...Wetlands, Continued from page 1

smell, collectively, make up part of nature’s best pollutant processing system. Natural chemical reactions alter or remove large quantities of pollutants. For example, phosphorous, a nutrient commonly used in fertilizer that causes excessive algae growth and degraded water quality, is removed by microbial and plant uptake in wetlands.

Along with nutrient uptake, wetland systems have the ability to take up, store and slowly release stormwater runoff. As the American landscape has developed and been covered with impervious surfaces, the amount and rate of stormwater runoff has increased. Wetlands dramatically slow the rate of runoff which allows cooling, sediment to settle out, and organics, like the phosphorous mentioned earlier, to be filtered by vegetation and microbial action. In this way they function in much the same capacity as large sponges absorbing, holding and attenuating waters.

North American wetlands are home to an astounding 600+ species of plants and animals. A surprising 43% of Federally Endangered Species rely on wetlands directly or indirectly for their survival. Regarded as the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems, wetlands serve as the home and/or breeding ground for numerous species of birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals.



Through years of research we have come to realize the ecosystem services and economic benefits provided by wetlands. Yet, the US still loses somewhere around 50,000 to 60,000 acres annually and new threats from development and land-use change show themselves almost daily.

Today, numerous federal, state and local agencies like The Delaware Highlands Conservancy are doing their part to protect wetland areas. The Great Dismal Swamp President Washington helped drain is now protected in perpetuity by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In like manner, each of us, as individuals, should strive to protect our own “dismal swamps”. If we each do our part to educate others, act responsibly and protect our special places, the fate of wetlands might not be so dismal after all.

SAT, JUNE 26 Join us for a native plants walk with botanist Dr. Ann Rhoads.
Call for details.

Introducing the A-Team

The Conservancy currently has 3 full-time staff members in addition to the Executive Director, Sue Currier. Since all of their names end in ‘A’, we like to refer to the group as the ‘A-team’. Give them a call or send them an email to learn more:



Julia Horrocks
Land Protection Coordinator
t: 570-226-3164
e: land@delawarehighlands.org

Julia works with private landowners, municipalities, and organizations to coordinate and implement creative solutions to protect open space in PA. She can work with you one-on-one to help determine whether a conservation easement or other land protection tool is right for you.

Melinda Ketcham
Land Protection Coordinator
t: 845-807-0535
e: nyland@delawarehighlands.org

Melinda works with Sullivan and Delaware, NY landowners to create conservation easements for their properties. She can provide people with tools for protecting their land and how to support the Conservancy through bequests in their will with our “Legacy Leader” program. Melinda also helps to run a variety of educational programs and assists New York municipalities and organizations with open space and farmland protection.



Amanda Subjin
Stewardship & Education Coordinator
t: 570-226-3164
e: conserve@delawarehighlands.org

As the Stewardship Coordinator, Amanda responds to questions from landowners regarding their conservation easement and the stewardship of their land. She also organizes educational programs for forest landowners in the area, including the Women and their Woods group, and coordinates with local providers to create the *Shop Local Save Land* guides and associated website.

2010 Annual Monitoring

Visits are now being scheduled and the Conservancy needs your assistance!

Complete the Survey: Please help the Conservancy prepare for this year's monitoring site visit by completing the short survey on the inside back cover of this issue of *Landlines*. Your answers will help us plan accordingly for this year's monitoring schedule.

Volunteer to be a Monitor: If you enjoy walking outside, meeting other landowners nearby to your protected property and have time to help with this year's annual monitoring visits, please call our office and let the staff know that you are interested.

Signs for Protected Property

In the Grantor Reserved Rights section of many of the Conservancy's conservation easements, there exists a provision allowing the Conservancy to post signs on the property.

Our larger signs, which read "This property is Protected with a Land Protection Agreement with the Delaware Highlands Conservancy", measure 12"x18" and are perfect for property access points or places visible to the public. The smaller signs measure approximately 3"x3" (shown below) and help to delineate the conservation easement boundary from adjacent property.



If you would like to post signs on your property, we can do so during this year's monitoring visit or arrange for you to receive signs to hang yourself. For more information, please contact Amanda at the Hawley office.

Strengthening Your Easement for Perpetuity

Are you interested in strengthening your easement and possibly receiving additional tax benefits? Then you may be interested in the option to amend your current Conservation Easement to have stricter terms. If the terms in your Conservation Easement allow for more than one building envelope, but you now feel like you do not want to have an additional home on your property, then this option may be right for you.

Some of our Conservation Easements contain a "building envelope" which is basically a designated area that is documented in your Baseline Documentation Report. The building envelope is where a majority of the development on your property is supposed to occur. This development may entail improvements on your home, a new home and the construction of accessory structures such as a garage, a shed and an in-law apartment. However, there are some Conservation Easements that have allowed for more than one building envelope to be constructed on the property. In some cases, this reserved right has not been exercised and some landowners have decided to not ever use this reserved right. If this is your situation, then you should contact the Conservancy to find out more details about how you can amend your Conservation Easement to make it stricter.

Not only would you be eliminating additional development on your property, but you may be eligible to receive a tax

benefit, as may have been the case when you originally donated the Conservation Easement on your property because you are limiting the development rights on your property. In turn this may provide an additional donation because of the value you may be giving up; the contribution you are making to the public by protecting the scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, water quality and forestlands on your property.



If you would like to learn more about amending your Conservation Easement and the process involved please contact:

Melinda Ketcham at 845-807-0535 or
nyland@delawarehighlands.org
if you are a NY landowner
OR

Julia Horrocks at 570-226-3164 or
land@delawarehighlands.org
if you are a PA landowner.