



# WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

[www.westmorelandconservancy.org](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org)

July 2010

Editors: Shelly Tichy & Kate Blackmore

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## October 9<sup>th</sup> Autumn Walk Spruce Flats Bog/Beam's Rocks/Green Gables with Dick Byers

Believe it or not, it's Autumn again. And every October we schedule an outing to explore interesting



locations and bear witness to the beauty that Nature has to offer. This year Dick Byers has agreed to lead our walk at the Spruce Flats Bog and Beam's Rocks in Laurel Mountain State Park. Fall colors are showing up early in the

Laurel Mountain region this year, so we should be able to enjoy them October 9<sup>th</sup>. We will meet Dick at the parking area at the bog at 9:30AM. After exploring the bog we will head over to Beam's Rocks to continue our outing. Dick says the view is not to be missed! When we finish our hike we'll make our way the uniquely beautiful Green Gables Restaurant in nearby Jennerstown.

Anyone planning to attend and wanting to

carpool should contact Shelly Tichy (see header). We'll be leaving Murrysville Panera Bread at 8:10 AM. If



**the weather is uncooperative (heavy storms) the event will be held October 23.** Because of past experience with Ligonier Days traffic the following route has been recommended:

Take the PA turnpike (I-76) to the Donegal exit. Turn left after the toll booth onto Rte 31, then left at 711-N to pass over the turnpike. Stay on 711-n for approximately 9 miles, then turn right at Darlington Rector Rd. for 1 mile. Continue onto PA-381 and turn right onto Linn Run Rd. (State Rte 2043). The Laurel Summit State Park parking area will be about 7.5 miles along on the left. If you get to the Laurel Summit Road, turn around and head back a few hundred feet. (You can also take Laurel Summit Rd. up from Hwy 30, however traffic is very heavy between Latrobe and Ligonier during Ligonier Days.)

## Don Harrison Community Trail

We are gratified at the interest in the Don Harrison Community Trail. While the trail is completely marked and passable for the adventurous, we've been taking steps toward giving the trail a more permanent disposition. The DHCT blazes will be placed IN ADDITION TO the pre-existing colors on each unique trail. For example, the Community trail begins on the yellow trail at the Walter Reserve, continues along the Valley Trail connector to the white trail on Murrysville Community Park. It then follows the connector trail to the red loop and the yellow path on the Caywood Reserve, following it to run concurrent with the yellow trail on the King Reserve. Those trails will maintain their markings while the BLUE blazes for DHCT will be placed nearby. We are planning to have 4"X6" signs placed approximately 700' apart along the entire length of the Community Trail. The simple design has "Don Harrison Community Trail" printed in white letters on a smart blue background. The color will be visible regardless of the weather or season. Anyone interested in helping with the trail work and/or blazing should see the planned workdays noted under "Schedule of Upcoming Events". You can also contact us at [wcnewsletter@comcast.net](mailto:wcnewsletter@comcast.net) for more information.

## Hunting is NOT permitted on Westmoreland Conservancy Nature Reserves - offering a nice place to walk this fall

Autumn is upon us. With its comfortable temperatures, blue skies, and colorful display of leaves, it is arguably one of the best times to enjoy our Pennsylvania woodlands. Autumn is also hunting season in our area, and often these two activities aren't very compatible on the same trails.

The Conservancy does not allow hunting on its properties, often by direction of the donors of these lands. These reserves should not be mistaken for the Parks managed by the municipality of Murrysville, which do allow hunting, although by permit only. It is always a good idea to wear bright colors during hunting season whenever you are in the woods as an extra precaution. And if you come across a hunter on Conservancy property, Please, DO NOT enter into a confrontation. If the hunting license is visible, turn that number into the police.



Please visit the Westmoreland Conservancy website for locations of these nature reserves. Most have a parking area with a sign identifying the nature reserve, and all are posted with orange Wildlife Safety Zone signs along their perimeters.

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## Caching With the Conservancy 2011

The date has been set for next year's big geocaching event: June 4, 2011. We're hoping for great weather this time and have lots of fun and interesting things planned for the day. Partnering with us this time are the Sportsmen and Landowners Association of Murrysville (SLAM), another important local community organization. For more information about the upcoming event, or for the 2010 booklet, see the CWTC page on the Westmoreland Conservancy website.

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## RALLY 2010

Rally 2010 is being held in Hartford, CT October 1-5. Shelly Tichy is attending, taking part in the Board Members' Summit on the 3<sup>rd</sup> where land trust officers and board members from across the country get together to share ideas and discuss concerns. The workshops being attended are geared toward engaging our youth, utilizing new technology to help generate support and increase the number of active volunteers. Rally is all about learning new things to help land trusts like the Westmoreland Conservancy continue to grow and thrive.

## Loyalhanna Grotto Talks Bats

by Tracee Imai

On July 28th, cavers Katie and Aron Schmid from the Loyalhanna Grotto attended the Westmoreland Conservancy's monthly board meeting to educate attendees about bats and white-nose syndrome. White-nose syndrome is a devastating fungal disease that has affected bat populations throughout the eastern and mid-western United States. Affected populations are effectively wiped out with die off rates averaging 96% and, in some cases, reaching levels as high as 99.9% in a single colony. The normal life span of a bat is approximately thirty years. Bats affected with the disease rarely survive one winter after contracting the fungus. Those that do make it, do not survive the second winter.

Bats are social animals often roosting together in colonies of hundreds of bats. It is common to see different species of bats intermingled in the same location. Unfortunately, this facilitates the spread of white-nose syndrome. It is thought that white-nose syndrome can be spread from bat to bat, but also be carried by humans. For this reason, many cave owners have asked for voluntary moratoriums on caving. Responsible cavers take care when visiting caves where moratoriums are not in effect. Many cavers segregate their gear and take pains to thoroughly disinfect everything, from helmets and ropes to boots and flashlights. The spores of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome are very difficult to kill. Multiple washings with Woolite or a concentrated 1:9 solution of water to bleach are required. Difficult and time consuming? Yes, but worth the effort to ensure the preservation of a vital member of the ecosystem.

Bats are, indeed, a vital member of the ecosystem. A bat can eat nearly half its body weight in insects each night. This translates into billions of pounds of insects each year. Without bats, we would be plagued by moths, mosquitoes, and other insects. Control of insect populations is vital to the health of trees and crops as well. According to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, a mere 150 big brown bats can protect local agriculture from 53 million rootworms each summer.

For more information on bats, white-nose syndrome, and what you can do to help, please contact Katie Schmid, chairperson of the Loyalhanna Grotto, at [kschmid3@gmail.com](mailto:kschmid3@gmail.com). To make a donation to fund research, please contact Aron Schmid, Grotto treasurer at [akschmid@yahoo.com](mailto:akschmid@yahoo.com) or go to Bat Conservation International at <http://www.batcon.org>. For more information about the Loyalhanna Grotto visit <http://www.karst.org/loyalhanna/>.

## Export Farmers' Market

As summer comes to a close, so does that Export Farmers' Market. For the second season Westmoreland Conservancy participated in the local market, telling attendees about our properties, trails and the role we play in our community. We would like to thank everyone visiting us and especially those who decided to join us, becoming members and helping us grow. A reminder to all that our meetings are on the 4th Wednesday each month (with the noted exceptions being November & December, when they move to the 3rd Wednesday due to Holiday conflicts). Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meetings!

## Summer Discovery Walks

The 2010 Summer Discovery Walk series covered the Tomer, King and Walter Reserves in July, August and September respectively.

Pia van de Venne led the walk at the Tomer Reserve on Twin Oaks Drive July 17<sup>th</sup>. She pointed out one of the few American Chestnut trees left along the trail.

The walk at the King Reserve was held August 21<sup>st</sup>. Dick Byers had thought to lead this walk, but medical issues stepped in and Tom Pearson consented to lead while Dick convalesced. Sadly, there were very few attendees.

September 18<sup>th</sup> was a perfect day for a walk at the Walter Reserve. Steward Kate Blackmore lead a dozen people through the property pointing out the stand of paw paw trees and identifying plants all along



the way. Join us for our Autumn Walk October 9<sup>th</sup> and check our website for additional walks and work dates on our

reserves and trails.

## Westmoreland Conservancy Online

Visit us at: [www.westmorelandconservancy.org](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org)

Flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/westmorelandconservancy/>

facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/fbwestmorelandconservancy>

## Schedule of Upcoming Events



Please respond if attending an outing or event to:

[wcnewsletter@comcast.net](mailto:wcnewsletter@comcast.net)

**Friday, Oct. 1 – Tuesday, Oct. 5:** Rally 2010: Hartford, CT

**Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup>:** Autumn Excursion Spruce Flats Bog/Beam's Rocks/Green Gables with Dick Byers. Meet at Murrysville Panera Bread at 8AM or at the Laurel Summit State Park parking area at 9:30 AM.

**Saturday, Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>:** Bear Hollow Park: 8 am Photo Hike

**Sunday, October 10:** work day blazing Don Harrison Community Trail - Walter Trail to Valley Trail connector: Parking area at Walter Reserve. 9AM, dry weather only.

**Sunday, October 24:** work day blazing Don Harrison Community Trail – connector from MCP to Caywood, Caywood trail: Parking area at Murrysville Community Park. 9AM, dry weather only.

**Wednesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room.

**Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>:** work day blazing Don Harrison Community Trail – Lower Caywood trail, ROWs to King: Parking area at Murrysville Community Park. 9AM, dry weather only

**Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>:** work day blazing Don Harrison Community Trail – King Trail: Parking area at King parking area. 9AM, dry weather only

\***Wednesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room.

\***Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room.

**Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room

\* **Holiday Meeting Schedule**

# Westmoreland Conservancy

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

[contact@westmorelandconservancy.org](mailto:contact@westmorelandconservancy.org)

## 2010 Board of Governors/Officers

**Officers:** President – Shelly Tichy  
 Vice President – Mark Emerson  
 Treasurer - Bjoerg Granger

**Governors:** Mount Fitzpatrick, Julie Weaver,  
 Cary Bohl, Alan Halperin,  
 Richard Wagner, Bill Powers  
 Joanne Kendall, Dick Byers

The meetings are open, and we look forward to seeing you there. Meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at the Murrysville Library at 7:30 pm.

**October 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**\*November 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**\*December 15<sup>th</sup>**

\* Holiday Schedule  
 The next Newsletter is scheduled for:  
**January 2011**



## Westmoreland Conservancy

An all volunteer, non-profit, 501c-3 Corporation dedicated to acquiring and preserving rural and rustic lands for the public good.



## Westmoreland Conservancy

### Membership Application

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

### Membership Levels

Individual.....\$15.00  
 Family.....20.00  
 Business membership.....40.00  
 Additional Donation.....\$\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code\_\_\_\_\_

e-mail\_\_\_\_\_

For your convenience, you may also renew your membership or give donations through our website at [www.westmorelandconservancy.org](http://www.westmorelandconservancy.org)