



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 1 JANUARY 2011

20 YEARS WITH THE WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY

In an introduction to the 1993 Annual Report, Fred Shirland wrote:

“The Westmoreland Conservancy has its roots in the S.O.S. Committee (Save Open Space) formed in January 1991 by a small group of concerned citizens with the purpose of saving the Kellman farm property from development. This group soon realized that the widespread interest displayed required a formal organization with a broader outlook. Hence, the Westmoreland Conservancy was incorporated in June of 1991 with the purpose of acquiring and preserving rural and rustic lands for the public good.”

In the twenty years since, the Westmoreland Conservancy has acquired 261 acres of land in addition to the initial Kellman Nature Reserve, which is now part of the Murrysville municipal park system. Today we are the custodians of seven Reserves that protect habitat, support miles of trails, and provide natural, green places for the current and future generations to explore and appreciate. By part-

nering with the Municipality we have created a 6+ mile community trail that allows passage from Murrysville’s western edge at Wiestertown Road all the way to Townsend Park on the east side of town.

January 2011 marks our 20th anniversary, and we have a year of celebration planned. We are planning a winter photo hike in February. The Don Harrison Community Trail will be officially opened this spring with the first guided walk along the trail. Our annual Caching with the Conservancy event is scheduled for Saturday, June 4th, and we are planning a membership picnic celebration later this summer.

We have made great strides since 1991 in protecting and preserving our natural heritage. We have been blessed with tremendous supporters allowing us continued growth and influence. We are part of your community and invite you to join us this year in celebrating this major milestone of our combined successes.



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A NEW LOOK, A NEW NAME

The Westmoreland Conservancy wants your creative ideas. We are having a contest to give our newsletter a new name; something that reflects our goals and objectives. Submit your ideas to wcnewsletter@comcast.net by March 20th, 2011 and we will vote on the new name at our March 23rd meeting. Alternatively you may also send in your ideas via Postal Service. Of course, all are invited to attend and vote for their favorite submission.

Twenty years ago Fred Shirland started the Westmoreland Conservancy Newsletter in order to keep our members informed of the Conservancy's activities. Today's

newsletter has much the same purpose and we are making an effort to keep in step with the changing times. We now have this newsletter available on our website and are looking into a new program to email it directly to you. We will continue to mail a paper version as well. Remember to send us your email address if you would like to receive our news via email.

Are there any topics of interest to you that you'd like to see in the newsletter? If so, please send us your ideas. While we cannot guarantee we can address everyone's ideas, we will consider all suggestions.

A WINTER PHOTOWALK

Feeling Adventurous? How many times have you wished there were more enjoyable outdoor activities during the cold, snowy months (no, shoveling the driveway does not count). Well, here's your opportunity to put those put those snow boots to excellent use.

Join us on Sunday, February 13, 2011, for a walk in the winter woods of Murrysville. We will meet at the parking area of the **McGinnis Reserve** on Hunter Road at 9:30 AM.

While we cannot guarantee a sighting of the elusive Peter Possum (hey if a groundhog can be named Gus, why not a possum?), we do promise the experience of seeing this Reserve in a new and different light.



CACHING WITH THE CONSERVANCY

We're anticipating sunny skies and warm temperatures for the June 4th Caching with the Conservancy event. Westmoreland Conservancy is partnering with SLAM (Sportsmen and Landowners Association of Murrysville) to bring you a fun-filled day of geocaching, exploration, local history and photography. Townsend Park is our base of operations again and we request that everyone meet at the lower pavilion for the opening programs and to pick up your registration packets at 8AM. From there you can begin at any park or reserve you like, proceed in any order, taking care to stay on the trails to reach your destinations. The identity of the historic location(s) will be kept secret until the event, but there will be a docent on site to answer any questions (except, of course, the cache location!).

Throughout the day there will be activities and presentations at both Townsend Park pavilions for those inclined to stay close or interested in particular programs. We will raffle 5 items at noon and the rest at the 5 PM picnic at the lower pavilion.

We request that you register for the picnic in advance. Please go to our website, find the CWTC page at :

www.westmorelandconservancy.org/CWTC2011 and let us know who and how many will be attending in order for us to accommodate everyone. Both food and monetary donations are greatly appreciated. Please contact Tracee at wcnewsletter@comcast.net if you are able to help out at a table or volunteer in any capacity.

WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY ONLINE

Website: 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

Wednesday, January 26th: Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room.

Sunday, February 13th: Winter Walk/Photo Hike: 9:30 AM at the McGinnis Reserve Parking area.

Wednesday, February 23rd: Monthly meeting 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room.

Wednesday, March 23rd: Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room.

Wednesday, April 27th: Annual Member's Meeting and elections, Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at the Murrysville Library Municipal Room

ACCREDITATION PROGRESS

What do financial institutions, educational institutions, medical institutions and day cares have in common?

For each to be considered a competent, reputable and

trust worthy organization it must be accredited by a Board that governs the rules, regulations and practices within the respective field. Accreditation processes vary by fields but one thing they have in common is the rigor.

Land trusts are no different. Once a land trust has been in existence for a period of time it behooves the organization to become accredited. Accreditation of a land trust assures donors and sponsors that the organization is run professionally and is structured so as to continue in perpetuity, thus protecting their lands forever.

Westmoreland Conservancy began the assessment process in February 2010 with the guidance of consulting firm E-Concepts. The preparation allowed us to review and update our policies, which will help strengthen our conservancy. Foundations awarding grant monies are more likely to consider an accredited organization, and it is our goal to be ready for consideration the latter part of 2011. It is a lot of work for any entity and we are no exception, but we believe we are up to the task. Anyone interested in helping us achieve this goal should contact us and get involved!

RALLY 2011

Rally 2011 is being held October 13 – 16 in Milwaukee, WI. Rally is all about learning new things to help land trusts like the Westmoreland Conservancy continue to grow and thrive. It provides invaluable networking opportunities as well.

John Williams from the Great Rivers Land Trust spoke to the need to have more people involved when he said, "What would be most useful is to have every single one of my board members attend, and everybody go to different sessions. There are not enough parts of my body to do all the things that need to be done!"*

Grant Bronk, a staff member from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks felt this annual gathering was like fresh oxygen and said, "It's incredibly important for me to come and be amongst this community to receive inspiration that helps me go out and remember the purpose behind all this."*

We hope to be able to send more people and attend more workshops this year. With increased knowledge and inspiration we can be better stewards of our own land trust.



**Comments from Rally promotional material of the Land Trust Alliance.*

Westmoreland Conservancy

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

contact@westmorelandconservancy.org

BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2010

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 4th Wednesday of each month at the Murrysville Library at 7:30 pm.

January 26th
February 23rd
March 23rd

The next newsletter is scheduled for April 2011



Westmoreland Conservancy

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



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Westmoreland Conservancy
P.O. Box 446
Murrysville, PA 15668

Membership Levels

Individual.....\$15
Family.....\$20
Business membership.....\$40
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

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