



Penns Valley Conservation Association

www.pennsvalley.net

Summer 2012



Learning about butterfly lifecycles with Master Gardeners Pam Ford and Lee Parmalee.

Environmental Days at Muddy Paws Marsh

--by Mary Kay Williams--

The Penns Valley School District has been visiting Muddy Paws Marsh through the planning and coordination by PVCA since 2001. Through a DEP *Growing Greener Grant*, PVCA worked to develop the wetlands for the school and community to learn about the importance of wetlands habitat for the health of our Watershed. There is never any charge for these programs, which are staffed by many volunteers. It has been a very successful partnership and we were thrilled to host second and fifth grade students this year. The students learn about nature—hands on—mud and all!

Many of the volunteers that assist with Environmental Days are PVCA members and members of the Penn State Extension Master Gardener program. One person that made it all possible was Mary Carol Frier. She spent countless hours not only coordinating field trips to Muddy Paws, but also to many other sites in Centre County. She deserves much credit for all her hard work!

It is exciting to realize that the students that first
continued on p. 3

Go local! Do it at CRICKFEST!

*Sunday September 2
11:00 to 6:00 at the Coburn Park*

There will be local food to eat, freshly prepared by local chefs, grown by folks you know or can meet at CRICKFEST.

There will be local music and storytelling, informative workshops, live farm animals, a demonstration by a master falconer, games for young and old, prizes and more, including the silent auction featuring all sorts of useful, delectable, and artistic items contributed by our multi-talented locals.

All of this fun and activity, besides entertaining us all, benefits the Penns Valley Conservation Association's Environmental Education program.

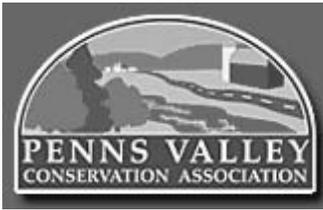
Centre Gives 2012!

PVCA would like to thank those who donated during the recent Centre Gives 2012 event organized by the Centre Foundation (formerly Centre County Community Foundation). Your participation allowed PVCA to qualify for matching funds, as noted below. We appreciate your ongoing support!

Donations ~ \$2125

Match ~ 512.18

Total ~ \$2,509.68 (includes 6% credit card processing fee)



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President's Column

--by Jim Zubler--

Ah those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer. Whoever coined this phrase/sang these lyrics most likely wasn't someone who tills the soil or works outdoors. As we all know, for our farmer members and backyard growers, the time to rest will be when the harvest is in the freezer or the jar. In keeping with the season, PVCA and its members have been busy with a great number of projects that are intended to make our Valley and watershed a better place.

Late last year the Board of Directors unveiled intentions to entertain Executive Director proposals and have someone on board by June 30, 2012. While we have missed this ambitious deadline, a contingent of the Board and some additional PVCA members have met with potential candidates discussing their skill sets, career aspirations and most importantly their fresh ideas for moving the organization forward. From these interviews, we have gained a new perspective and learned much. We are now faced with the tough decision to choose someone who can carry our/your vision and mission forward to the larger community recruiting many additional stewards for this special community.

The Community Outreach Committee has likewise been busy planning activities for this year's Crickfest, marking its tenth year of informing the citizens of the qualities of our watershed in a fun and demonstrative manner with hands-on fun for the young and young at heart. As always, we encourage you to support this event held at the "forks" in Coburn the Sunday of Labor day weekend.

Speaking of support, we thank all those who contributed during the Centre Gives challenge through the Centre Community Foundation. We received 42 gifts totaling \$2,125.00 plus a match from the Foundation to end the drive with just a little over \$2,500.00. Any of you who were unable to participate during the Centre Gives event, may still contribute through the normal means.

I look forward to seeing all of you at Crickfest!

Thank you for being a GREAT steward of the Valley,

--Jim

PVCA's Mission and Vision

PVCA serves as a steward for the natural and cultural communities in the Upper Penns Creek Watershed. We seek to preserve and honor the agricultural roots of Penns Valley by protecting and conserving its waters, farmlands, forests, and rural heritage.

PVCA envisions an engaged community, where growth is balanced with support for healthy natural systems that foster the local economy. Our Valley has dark night skies, clear streams, healthy forests, prosperous farms, and local jobs.

Frog Festival Held at Muddy Paws Marsh

--By Mary Kay Williams--

On Saturday, June 9th, Muddy Paws Marsh held our second annual Frog Festival. This program is unique because it utilizes the many wetland habitats that are present on the property. About 125 adults and children attended this free program sponsored in cooperation with Penn State Extension's Master Gardener of Centre County program and PVCA.

This annual event encourages attendees to learn about and enjoy nature through art, science, and play through hands-on learning stations. Dr. Jim Julian, an instructor in Biology at Penn State, shared his love and knowledge of frogs, allowing others to see the frogs up close and discuss the five species that are present at Muddy Paws Marsh: Spring Peepers, Bullfrogs, Green Frogs, Pickerel Frogs and American Toads. Attendees visited learning stations throughout the wetlands, painting frog pictures, finding macroinvertebrates, bird watching while making a birdseed holder, and studying native plants.

Muddy Paws Marsh is an official Master Gardener of Centre County site. At the Frog Fest, the following Master Gardeners volunteered: Beryle Palmiter, Teresa Tassoti, Lar Lease and Justin Wheeler. Justin brought some wonderful information about butterfly life cycles from the Snetsinger Butterfly Garden at Tudek Park. Other community volunteers were Steph and Jim Flannigan and Sarah Chamberlain.

Why does Muddy Paws Marsh offer a frog festival? The festival brings community members close to nature and allows them to appreciate the importance of frogs in our local eco-system. Like the proverbial canaries in the coalmine, frog health can tell us a lot about the quality of our water and habitat. And, if we learn about how frogs and other pieces of nature are important in our 'web of life', we will be more inclined to protect and preserve them.

Thanks to our volunteers and community members who came to learn more about and appreciate all that nature has to offer us in Penns Valley. All in all it was a 'hoppin' good time in nature!



Dr. Julian shares his love of frogs at Frog Fest.

Environmental Days, continued from p.1

came to Muddy Paws in 2001 to learn about the importance of wetlands are now in their early 20's. Hopefully they are continuing to spread the positive environmental stewardship message in their daily lives.

Slow Money Updates

The 2012 **Find It Here** Business Directory is here! Look for it in your favorite stores, restaurants and at Crickfest! This year's edition has been updated with indexes and was financed by the merchants themselves, so be sure to let them know that you found them through the directory.

On other fronts, Slow Money members were deeply involved in the "Meet Millheim!" event that took place July 20-22nd. The event featured many fun activities and made for a lively weekend in what is usually a pretty slow season.

We've been doing our research, and come fall, we plan to get serious about facilitating small local investment opportunities for both investors and small farmers or businesses who need capital in order to grow. If you're interested, please attend the September Slow Money meeting on September 18th. Contact Lisa Marshall (349-5561) for location and details.

---Fun Activities!---

MOUNTAIN HOMESTEAD

FARM ANIMALS

RUBBER DUCK RACES

FALCON TALK &
DEMONSTRATION

CHILDREN'S TENT
*featuring Crafts, a
Scavenger Hunt & More*

LEARNING TENT

*Workshops: Fall Blooming
Pollinators, 5 Knots You
Need to Know, Beat the
Heat, Defeat the Weeds,
Use Less Water, &
Permaculture Methods*

WATER ROCKETS

PA HONEY QUEEN

STORY TELLERS

**Crickfest 2012
Music & Storytelling**

Come on down to hear...



- 12:00 Singer-Songwriter Round Robin
- 1:00 Master Storyteller Betsey Whitman
- 1:15 Sterling Moon
- 2:15 Condo and Wiggus
- 3:15 Master Storyteller Betsey Whitman
- 3:30 Chicken Tractor Deluxe
- 4:45 Mountain Minstrelsy

Crickfest Vittles

This year's food for Crickfest is being prepared by Bobbie's Kitchen and focuses on local goodness from our bounteous farm community!

Cooks Kathy Shimp and Bobbie Dash have put together a menu using local meats, produce, and organic ingredients. Our delicious, fresh offerings include:

- ~Pulled Pork Sandwiches with
Cherry Chipotle Barbeque Sauce
- ~White Bean Spread
- ~Fresh Veggies and Vinaigrette Wraps
- ~Chicken Salad on Greens
- ~Potato Salad ~Coleslaw
- ~Corn on the Cob ~Melon Cups
- ~Vegetarian Chili and Cornbread

The Sweet Creek Bakers and many other local bakers will stock the Sweet Creek Café with their scrumptious array of baked goods and beverages. Both vendors will be located in the same area this year for your convenience. At the end of the festival, check us out for any leftovers that we will be selling. See you there!

**CRICKFEST
2012**

**Sunday, Sept. 2nd
11-6 at Coburn Park**

Become a Friend of the 10th Annual Crickfest!

Our 10th Crickfest Celebration--doesn't that sound great! Each year our festival has grown and become one of the most enjoyable late summer activities where we can all join in the down-home community celebration of Place. Our Valley communities are very special because of all of the *Friends* that help nurture and sustain our projects and activities.

Your donation as a *Friend* or *Sponsor* of Crickfest will help provide a great festival and offset the expenses for the day so more of the proceeds can go back into the Educational Programs in the Penns Valley Area School District. Please use the form below. We will send you a letter for tax purposes.

Thank you, and we'll see you there! Spread the word and bring your friends to Crickfest 2012!

Think GREEN at Crickfest!

We would like our festival to generate as little waste as possible. Help us lower our impact by bringing your own utensils and plates. Bring a water bottle—water dispensers will be available at several locations. And be sure to make good use of the Recycling and Composting options, coordinated by Ecovents!

Crickfest Volunteers Needed!

Crickfest is an all volunteer powered event. Are you able to lend a hand?

- Parking
- Food Service
- Silent Auction Ticket Sales
- Breakdown at the end of the day
- Setup
- Cashier
- Kids Activities

If you're able to volunteer, contact Judith Fordham: jfordham@verizon.net

Thanks for your donations!!

Please help support our two big Crickfest Fundraisers:

Baked Goods for the Sweet Creek Café!



Bring your tastiest cookies, brownies, cakes and pies on the day of the event. Contact Judith if you're able to donate: 349-4377.

Bid in our Silent Auction!



This year's auction will feature a wide variety of artwork, household items, gift certificates for goods and services provided by local businesses. Come prepared to bid on all the generous donations from local businesses and individuals!



Name _____
 Business _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____

- Friends of Crickfest----- \$25 \$50 \$75 I'd like to volunteer
- Sponsors of Crickfest----- \$100 \$200 Other \$ _____ Please keep my donation anonymous

Amount Enclosed _____

--All donations are tax deductible--

Please make check payable to PVCA and mail to PO Box 165 Aaronsburg, PA 16820

Around the Watershed...

--By George Kelly and Lysle Sherwin--

As reported in the last newsletter the Watershed Committee has a number of oars in the water (and riparian seedlings in the ground). During May and June, the committee facilitated planting of riparian and early successional forest habitat projects for five landowners in Georges Valley and elsewhere in the upper Penns Creek watershed. Over 1,400 native trees and shrubs were planted at those five sites. Species planted included hard-to-find aspen and alder which have excellent habitat characteristics for young forest wildlife such as woodcock and whip-poor-will. PVCA funded purchase of nursery stock and protective tree tubes as well as site preparation (invasive mowing and sod scarification to reduce competition), planting, and followup maintenance performed by US Fish and Wildlife Habitat Partners work crews based in Old Fort.

Six additional landowners contacted through the Early Successional Forest information meeting cosponsored by PVCA and the Center for Watershed Stewardship have expressed interest and site visits are being made by the committee to discuss potential cooperative projects. One upland habitat and stream restoration project at the David and Jan Martinec farm in Farmers Mills would involve over 50 acres of young forest habitat and 1,800 feet of fish habitat improvement. Both the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Pennsylvania Game Commission "Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Improvement Program" would be providing technical and financial assistance.

The committee's "oars in the water" are 7 additional stream temperature data loggers installed in early July at new locations in Muddy Creek and the mainstem of Penns Creek. A total of 17 locations are being monitored and data shared with PA Fish and Boat Commission. The new locations will give more information on thermal conditions in Muddy Creek where a water temperature of 87 degrees F, lethal to trout, was recorded last summer and in Penns Creek at the confluence with Elk Creek.



Lysle Sherwin with aspen seedlings ready to be planted.

National Recognition for Penns Creek" Young Forest" Initiative

Chuck Fergus, well-known author and webdesigner of the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), visited Penns Valley in early June to gather information and meet landowners and leaders of the upper Penns Creek watershed early successional forest initiative to prepare a feature article for a new website at WMI. "The Young Forest Project" page at youngforest.org will soon have the article titled "Landowners Working Jointly in a Pennsylvania Watershed" listed under Projects in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Fergus visited five of the active projects and interviewed cooperating landowners Doug Bierly, Jerry Myers, and Jennifer Tucker to talk about their reasons and motivation to get involved in the young forest initiative.

The approach of cooperating landowners at watershed scale to advance wildlife habitat goals being used in Penns Valley may offer a model for other regions, according to Fergus. An important element in launching the work was the two-year practicum course carried out by Landscape Architecture grad students Jake Powell and Drew Siglin at the Center for Watershed Stewardship. Their publication on the practicum form and process titled "2012 Keystone Project Portfolio" is being downloaded to the Young Forest page to be available as a reference for other similar efforts.



Permaculture in Action!

Have You Seen the Learning Garden Lately?

--by Julie Mason--

We are happy to announce the establishment of a brand new Forest Garden at the Penns Valley Community Learning Garden, located on Route 45 at the site of the Millheim Farmers Market.

The Forest Garden was begun with a PermacultureBlitz on April 7. Permaculture, originating in Australia, describes a movement to develop sustainable human settlements and agricultural systems modelled on natural ecosystems. A group of volunteers led by Jackie Bonomo and Lindsey Aumiller, are coming together for Blitzes (work parties) at various locations, to show folks how to incorporate food production right in their neighborhoods.

Each food-producing tree and bush is surrounded by a “guild” of plants that support the needs of the others, whether it is fixing nitrogen in the soil or attracting beneficial insects, providing shade where necessary or repelling harmful insects and rodents. The Learning Garden has established one such guild so far, with plans to do more.

After a few years of hauling water, this year we’re happy to have installed a rainwater collection and drip irrigation system with the help of a grant from the PA DEP. With the kind permission of the American Legion Keystone Post 444, we had rain gutters installed on their storage building to funnel rain into our 1,100-gallon storage tank. Using only gravity to move it, it flows through drip tape and is deposited directly at the roots of the plants.

The Learning Garden also features a new Herb Garden, which is separated into culinary and medicinal sections. Resident herbalist, Jennifer Tucker, is often in the garden Saturday mornings, talking about how to harvest and use many species. Garden Guru, Warren Leitzel, can usually be found there as well, hard at work, but available to give visitors a tour and answer a wide variety of gardening questions.

So if you haven’t been to the Learning Garden lately, stop by for a tour! Or better yet, join our group of volunteers as we continue to develop this wonderful local resource!

Penns Valley Rails To Trails Feasibility Study

--by Ann Glaser--

The Gregg Township Supervisors have decided to pursue the development of a Rails to Trails project, as part of the Centre County Recreation and Greenways Plan. If found feasible, the new trails system would connect Penns Valley with other local communities, including Boalsburg, Lemont, and State College. On May 24th, the request for proposals (RFP) for the Penns Valley Rails To Trails Feasibility Study was released publicly. Details and the RFP are available at <http://www.co.centre.pa.us/planning/recreational.asp>.

On July 12th, the proposals were opened and distributed to the Proposal Review Committee for evaluation. Members of the committee are:

Pat Leary – Gregg Twp Supervisor/Penns Valley Regional Planning Commission, **Jane Scheuchenzuber** – Gregg Twp Planning Commission, **Denny Foust** – Potter Twp Supervisor/Penns Valley Regional Planning Commission, **George Wilt** – Resident, property owner in the study corridor, **Ann Glaser** – PVCA, **Jim Zubler** – PVCA, **Trish Meek** – Centre Regional Planning Agency/Centre Co. Metropolitan Planning Organization, **Mike Bloom** – Centre Co. Planning & Community Development/Centre Co. Metropolitan Planning Organization.

At the time of this writing we are involved in scoring each proposal and are aiming to complete scoring by July 27th. Based on the review of these proposals, we hope to short list 3 firms for presentations and interviews to take place Aug. 1st. By the end of the day, we hope to have a consultant to recommend to Gregg Twp. to hire to complete the study.



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PVCA at Grange Fair!

Check out PVCA's booth at the Grange Fair's "Good Causes on Grove Street" display. PVCA will feature its upcoming Crickfest celebration (September 2) and a recap of PVCA's Environmental Days in the Penns Valley Area School District. Plans for the 2013 Renewable Energy Fair at the American Legion Building in Centre Hall on April 6, 2013 will be announced.

Stop by your PVCA tent and find out what is going on in the Penns Creek watershed!

Conservation Programs and Wildlife Habitat Improvement Practices

**at Chicory Lane Farm
246 Brush Mt. Rd in Spring Mills
August 18th ~ 9:30 – 3:30**

Join professionals from Penn State Extension, Centre Co. Conservation District, DCNR Bureau of Forestry, PA Game Commission, USFWS and more to learn about land management techniques that enhance wildlife habitat and protect natural resources.

To register, call 877-489-1398. Workshop attendance is \$15 which includes lunch and materials.

Crickfest 2012!



Sunday, September 2nd, 11am—6pm
at Coburn Park ~ Coburn, PA



