

# Common Ground

SPRING



2008

OUR LAND. OUR FUTURE. OUR CHOICE.

## GREEN ACRES

### QUAKER CAMP PRESERVES PORTION OF PROPERTY

Tucked away on 60 acres of rolling, wooded hills along Geigel Hill Road, Camp Onas has been a summer home for kids for 40 years. The non-profit Quaker camp runs four two-week sessions from mid-June through mid-August, and community and school programs fill out the rest of the calendar.

Just under 40 acres of the property have come under conservation easement through the Tinicum Conservancy. Sue Gould, camp director, says the camp's Board of Directors sought the easement for two reasons: "We needed a source of income and we wanted to keep that area of the property natural and undeveloped," she says. "We had no plans to build on it and wanted to preserve it for the future."

The protected area lies on the southeast portion of the camp property and includes gently sloping hills, second-growth cedar, cherry, and walnut trees, a farm pond and wetland area, and an intermittent stream.

Sue is a second-generation camp director. Her parents were *(cont. on pg. 4)*



Campers and their families at Walnut Grove at Camp Onas

**"In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy." - John Sawhill**

### DON'T MISS:

- Photo Contest (pg. 6)
- Your Donation Envelope (insert)

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### TINICUM CONSERVANCY HIRES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Jim Engel is a California boy, but don't hold that against him. He's also well versed in land conservation issues and an avid outdoorsman who's spent time since moving to the East Coast getting to know the Delaware River and its tributaries.

Jim is TC's new executive director, assuming the role in February after several years with the New Jersey *(cont. on pg. 4)*

# OUR MISSION

To maintain a land conservancy for the preservation of open space, natural resources and scenic features; and to establish and support environmental and historical programs.

## TINICUM CONSERVANCY ADMINISTRATION

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Karen Budd, *President*  
Jim Vaseleck, *Vice President*  
Peggy Enoch, *Secretary*  
Richard Rosamilia, *Treasurer*  
Diane Allison  
Nancy Bousum  
Betsi Campbell  
Jack Halstead  
Jeff Keller  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Jim Engel

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

Jim Engel, *Editor-in-Chief*  
Dianna Sinovic, *Editor & Writer*  
Kris Becker, *Creative Director*

### CONTRIBUTORS:

Diane Allison, Karen Budd,  
Betsi Campbell, Kathleen Con-  
nally, Peggy Enoch, Jeff Keller,  
Martie Kyde

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by Tincum Conservancy.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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Tincum Conservancy is a recognized 501(c)(3) charitable  
organization and exists for charitable, educational and  
scientific purposes.

We welcome your comments, questions  
and suggestions.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Spring 2008

Dear Members and Friends:



As we all well know, a new year inspires us to make resolutions: We are going to lose weight, or we are going to give up smoking. Or, we are going to give more of ourselves to worthy causes. What kinds of resolutions can a land trust make?

The Tincum Conservancy tackled an enormous workload and made good progress in 2007. We helped to protect an additional 262 acres in Tincum. But there are many possible resolutions for 2008. There is the goal of more land preservation, of course. I hope for 500 more acres protected in Tincum in 2008, with participation by landowners of properties large and small. I hope for a significant increase in our membership. With your help, a realistic goal is a 20 percent increase. So spread the word! I hope that the Conservancy will reach out to the community and its neighbors with an even better newsletter, worthwhile education programs, and further stewardship of our resources. I hope that the Tincum Conservancy will successfully gain accreditation in 2008 - a stamp of approval from the national Land Trust Alliance that will demonstrate that we are upholding the highest possible land trust standards. Finally, I hope that the Conservancy will make available exciting and diverse volunteer opportunities so that a greater number of people can participate in this wonderful endeavor.

This is our Conservancy - yours and mine - and its continued success is our common resolution for 2008.

**"We could have saved the Earth but we were too damned cheap."**

- Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

**Your Conservancy could not function without its volunteers. The Executive Director and Trustees would like to thank the following people for their recent gifts of time.**

## SHOUT OUT

**Martie Kyde** – for 15 years of service to TC. Martie left the board in January. Her many contributions include chairing the Conservation Programs, grant writing, baseline information gathering, Land Preservation Committee member, newsletter writing, and any other tasks that needed doing. TC will miss Martie greatly.

**Ron Novak** – for six very active years on the board. Ron spent countless hours working on easement drafting, developing and updating the TC Board Manual, and chairing the Land Preservation Committee. Ron held TC to the highest standards of land protection and stewardship. His work will guide TC for years to come.

**Graham and Beverly Place and Boyce Budd** – for all their work setting up and tearing down booths for the September Block Party. Beverly also chaired the bake table, a big job. Other important volunteers were **Stana Lennox, John Moore, Rob Morrison, June Rothkopf, Pat Whitacre, Betsy Jacobs, Diane and Dave Allison, Joe Billingham** and **Nancy and Rachel Shaffran**. **Maureen Santina** designed the creative brochure for the Block Party.

**Doug Sardo** – for a donation of several pieces of his artwork to TC.

**Mark Manchester** – for helping **Kris Becker** and **Betsi Campbell** print names and addresses directly onto the postcards announcing TC's grassland bird program on March 2. Mark's computer expertise and mailings experience were an enormous help!

**Ann Ballantine** – for the wonderful drawing on the postcard for the grassland bird program.

**Todd Quinby** – for his willingness to plow the Stover Mill parking lot in the event of snow.

## THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

*Members and Friends:*

*At the end of January, we said good-bye to Kathi Throckmorton. Although Kathi was executive director of the Tincum Conservancy for only a little less than two years, her role was a very important one. Under her guidance the Conservancy made the transition from being an all-volunteer land trust to one with a full-time executive director, a part-time accountant, and plans in place for a part-time administrative assistant.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

**A recent survey of 75 land trusts in Pennsylvania shows that the Tincum Conservancy rates 14th in the number of acres under easement.**

*Kathi coordinated the challenging task of setting up the Conservancy's first permanent office at the Stover Mill, with advanced technology generously provided by grant money. She developed excellent volunteer teams to create a first-rate newsletter, an improved membership program, a database inventory, and remote access to Conservancy files.*

*At a time when land trusts all over the country are under pressure to meet ever higher standards, Kathi made certain that the Tincum Conservancy can meet increased IRS scrutiny. She adapted the new Pennsylvania Land Trust Association conservation easement document to the needs of Tincum landowners. Most important, the Conservancy's land preservation work continues at an impressive pace.*

*We thank Kathi for her hard work and wish her success in the future. For an introduction to our new executive director, Jim Engel, as well as new board member, Diane Allison, see the related articles on pages one and five.*

*Karen Budd*

camp directors after Onas moved to Tinicum Township from its original location in Rushland, Pa., in the mid-1960s. She and her siblings all attended the camp and were camp counselors. As an adult, she returned as the summer director and became the full-time director in 1995. She and her husband, David, live at the camp year-round. (Onas means "quill" in Lenape and is the name given to William Penn by the Native Americans.)

Sue's camp saga is repeated in the campers themselves. Eighty percent of them return year after year, and when they are too old to attend—the camp is for 8- to 13-year-olds—they often return as camp aids and counselors.

Onas is a traditional summer overnight camp, with sports, games, canoeing on the pond, nature programs, drama workshops, music performances, and arts/crafts. Campers also learn about animal care by tending to the donkeys Paco and Pepita, a pot-bellied pig named Puddy, and a golden retriever named Ellie. They compost all leftover food and animal waste, enriching the soil in the camp garden and other areas.



**Part of the 40 acres under easement at Camp Onas**

Many of the 400 campers each season come from surrounding Bucks County and Delaware Valley towns, but others are from farther flung areas: New York, Maryland, Virginia, Florida, and California. A few even make the trip from overseas.

In the spring and fall, the camp is host to various school groups for three-day overnight outdoor education programs. Tinicum Elementary uses the camp every year for its fifth grade graduation party, and a school in Bath, Pa., brings students for an annual challenge day. On winter weekends, civic, religious, and non-profit groups come for retreats.

*- Article by Dianna Sinovic/Photos by Camp Onas*



**Happy campers**

## TC Hires New Exec. Director

*(cont. from pg. 1)* Conservation Foundation and the Nature Conservancy. He brings excellent experience to TC's land preservation efforts. As executive director of the Ojai Valley Land

Conservancy in California, he helped to transform that organization from a one-person staff and a \$45,000 budget to a six-member staff and a \$475,000 budget within just seven years. "I learned how to take an organization with a worthy mission and convert it to a group with a solid history of results and a large and diverse group of supporters," he says.

Jim grew up in Malibu—back before it became the trendy celebrity enclave. His parents built their own house on property between the mountains and the beach and instilled a love of nature and the outdoors that led to his choice of careers. "I've always had a passion for the natural world," Jim says. After graduating from Colorado State University with a degree in park management, he started out developing and directing programs in environmental education at nature centers in Southern California. He even built a nature center from scratch in Fontana, Calif. When he started at that site, he says, "There was just a building with nothing in it and no landscaping."

He became the expert who helped environmental organizations grow through fund-raising and strategic planning. As a consultant, he worked with small groups across the West, from Idaho to New Mexico. But consulting, though enjoyable, didn't allow him to see the final outcome of his projects, so he decided to switch to land conservation. "That," he says, "was absolutely my niche." The director's job in Ojai allowed him to tap into the many fields of expertise he'd developed over the years: fund-raising, education, administration, and program management. He takes special pride in his ability to create successful partnerships with farmers, other landowners, and government representatives.

Jim and his wife, Dawn, and their 4-year-old daughter live in Morris County, N.J., on 2-1/2 acres just over the border from Hunterdon County. Their property is surrounded by several thousand acres of preserved farmland.

Although he's still getting settled into his new post, Jim has several goals in mind at TC. He looks forward to getting out into the community and working with the people of Tinicum Township and neighboring communities. "I want to reach out to landowners and continue the great momentum of land protection in the township," he says. He's also looking to build the financial capacity of TC to meet future opportunities.

We are glad to have you, Jim!

*- Article by Karen Budd and Dianna Sinovic /Photo by Karen Budd*

**"Don't blow it - good planets are hard to find."**

*- quoted in Time*

**"I conceive that the land belongs to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living, and countless numbers are still unborn."**

*- Author Unknown*

# THE PEOPLE PAGE

## TRUSTEE SPOTLIGHT: Jim Vaseleck



Jim Vaseleck freely admits that he's one of the few TC trustees who doesn't have his land under conservation easement. "But that's because it doesn't qualify," he says with a chuckle. "Two of the three acres are palisades." Jim and his partner, Hank Cochran, live along the Delaware Canal in Uhlerstown, in Mike Uhler's former boat shop, which has been converted into a comfortable home. He's been a TC trustee since 2004, when he filled a position vacated by a resignation. He's now in his last year of a full three-year term.

**"There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew."**

*- Marshall McLuhan*

Jim, an attorney who works for the Law School Admission Council, initially wanted to join one of the township's committees, but after attending a township meeting, changed his mind. "I decided I didn't want to be on any of them," he remembers. But he couldn't get away so easily. Township Supervisor Boyce Budd called to suggest he consider the Conservancy as an alternative group with which to volunteer his time. After meeting with Budd's wife, Karen, TC president, Jim joined up.

Jim loves the rural flavor and natural beauty of the township, which he's called home for 11 years. "But it's not just pretty," he says. "There are ecological values I wasn't aware of." He was surprised, for instance, at the number and quality of watersheds in the area.

The house on the canal is Jim's second since moving to the area from New Hope. He and Hank first lived at Bridge Five along River Road. "The first house we looked at here was ideal," he says. "That's what brought us here." And when they outgrew that first house, they didn't think of moving away from Tinicum. "We liked it so much, we decided to stay."

Several years ago, while wandering through an antique show, he was delighted to find a 1920s era painting of his canal house—back when it was a working boathouse. "I thought it looked familiar," he says. "Then I realized it was my house."

*- Article by Dianna Sinovic/Photo by John Kalnin*

Diane Allison figures she's built roughly 2,000 bluebird boxes with school groups and scout troops over the years—enough boxes to earn her the nickname the Bluebird Lady. But although bluebirds have been her focus, she's an avid birder of all species, regularly compiling lists for several annual bird counts in the area. Her interest in birds is just one aspect of a larger concern for the environment and a longstanding support of the Tinicum Conservancy.

## TRUSTEE SPOTLIGHT: Diane Allison

"I've been supportive of the mission forever," says Diane, one of several new TC board members who took their posts in January. She and her husband, Dave, own a hybrid car and have converted the heating/cooling system in their home to geothermal. Their land has been under conservation easement since 2004. Their eight acres is scattered with not only bluebird boxes, but other birdhouses and bat boxes, as well. They are also encouraging part of the property to revert back to forest. "It's not a huge property," she says, "but we really felt that it was important to support the concept of conservation easements."

**"So bleak is the picture... that the bulldozer and not the atomic bomb may turn out to be the most destructive invention of the 20th century."**

*- Philip Shabecoff,  
New York Times Magazine*



She remembers what tipped her resolve to protect their small patch of land. "I read one day about a piece of property in Perkasio," she says. "It was eight acres, and they were talking about 195 units. I read that and I thought, 'You know what, eight acres isn't so small—in terms of the impact it could have if it were developed to the max.'" As it turned out, a decision helped spark neighbors to follow suit. "It's actually turned into a pretty good little enclave of conserved properties," she says of their corner *(cont. on pg. 8)*

# OUR BACK



**"Little Fox in Flowers"**  
Photo by Maureen Santina



**"Kitten Discovers Deer"**  
Photo by Lou Pomante

## CRITTERS

Here's another installment of Community Critters with pictures provided by you—our readers—on the wildlife that live in the yards of Tincum Township. Thanks to all who submitted photos, whether furry or feathered. Are you ready for a new challenge? This issue will highlight a special township resource: photos of children in nature. We will also feature Email low resolution files to: [picture@tinicumconservation.org](mailto:picture@tinicumconservation.org). Please ask for higher resolution pix for print. Send your favorite snaps to Tincum Conservation, PA 18920 (if you send a stamped, self-addressed envelope, we can't guarantee, to return your photos).

### CORRECTION:

We wish to apologize for the misspelling of the last names of two of the talented photo contributors to our last issue: Maureen Santina (not Santini) and Joan Carter (not Campbell).



**"Horse Heaven"**  
Photo by Lisa Hossler



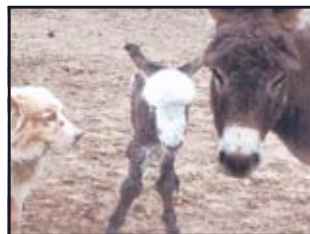
**"A Very Happy Pig at Purely Farm"**  
Photo by Martie Hyde



**"Snowbirds"**  
Photo by Kayla



**"Rainbow"**  
Photo by Maureen Santina



**"Baby Snorkel Makes Her Debut"**  
Photo by Kris Becker



**"Contestant at the Tincum Park Dog Show"**  
Photo by Kris Becker

**"The earth we abuse and the living things we kill will, in the end, take their revenge; for in exploiting their presence we are diminishing our future."**  
- Marya Mannes



**"Monarch Caterpillars"**  
Photo by Joan Carter



Photo by

HELP PRESERVE THIS BEAUTY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

# CK YARD

## GALORE !

Common Ground's popular photo gallery, readership. This photo edition focuses on birds, woods, streams, and meadows of nature who shared their "neighbors" with us, whether crawling, crawling or flying. The Fall edition of Common Ground features its children. Please send us your photos to [photos@TinicumConservancy.org](mailto:photos@TinicumConservancy.org) (we may use for printing purposes) or snailmail your photos to Tinicum/Photos, PO Box 206, Erwinna, PA. If-addressed envelope we will try, but we cannot accept our hardcopy submissions).



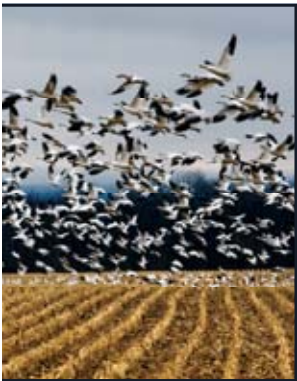
**"A Local Resident"**  
Photo by Maureen Santina



**"Clydesdale Wanna Be"**  
Photo by Maureen Santina

**"Our time is so short, and the future so terrifyingly long. Through the art of brush, pen and lens ... we possess a swift and sure means of touching the conscience and clearing the vision."**

*- Ansel Adams*



**"A Flock of Geese"**  
Photo by Kathleen Connally



**"Chicken Dance"**  
Photo by Kathleen Connally



**"Avian Visitors: Black Vultures"**  
Photo by Martie Kyde



**"Puppy Love"**  
Photo by Lisa Hossler



**"Creating a Flap"**  
Photo by Maureen Santina



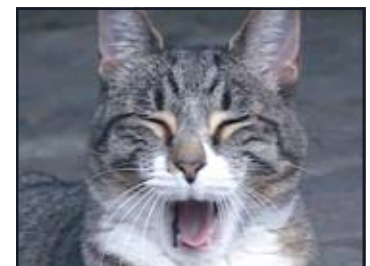
**"Smile"**  
Photo by Kathleen Fisher



**"Monarch Butterfly"**  
Photo by Maureen Santina



**"Strolling on River Road"**  
Photo by Maureen Santina



**"Benjamin"**  
Photo by Stu Horn

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS. RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN TODAY.

## HIDDEN TREASURES

When you drive past the small white chapel on Geigel Hill Road, you are seeing a building that is partly yours. Rock Ridge Chapel, built in



Winter chapel

1847, is part of the Tincum community. The chapel has a devoted group of trustees and caretakers who follow in the footsteps of many township residents who have cherished the chapel, worshiped there, and sometimes held oyster suppers and strawberry festivals to raise money to fix the roof and windows.

The 2.7-acre Rock Ridge property was originally part of a 204-acre tract. The first deed for that tract is dated April 15, 1794, and shows a transfer from the "London Company Tract" and the estate of George Bryan, Esq., to David Fox. The chapel was erected 53 years later, and on Sundays, as many as 250 congregants crowded in to hear the service. When the chapel's preacher, the Rev. S.S. Diehl, died in 1924 after 33 years in the pulpit, the congregation diminished and the chapel fell into disuse. An attempt to revive the chapel in 1955 did not succeed.

The Tincum Civic Association came to the rescue of the neglected building in 1972 by paying \$295 in back taxes. Neighbors John Quinby, Carl Damm, and Vic Meierdierck donated time and talent to prepare the building for a Thanksgiving Eve service that year led by Dr. Robert Perry, father of Tincum resident Ethan Perry. John Quinby remembers that many others were part of the cleanup brigade, including Bill and Anne Bickel and Joanne Blessing. John had just returned from hunting in Maine when he joined the roof repair crew. The scaffolding gave way and John slipped off the roof, landing on nearby rocks and was laid up for three months.



Interior view

Today the chapel is the setting for three annual nondenominational services—on Thanksgiving Eve, Christmas Eve, and at Easter sunrise. Trustee Joanne Hamilton is one of the enthusiastic group that promotes the chapel for weddings, memorial services, and showers. Contact Joanne at 610-847-2906.

- Article by Peggy Enoch/Photos by Kathleen Connally

## Trustee Spotlight: Diane Allison

(cont. from pg. 5) of Hollow Horn and Ervin roads.

As a board member, Diane is overseeing the Conservation Spotlight programs, hoping to bring in more participants by sending out postcards to all township residents. Tincum artist Anne Ballantine did the artwork for the first postcard—an Eastern meadowlark bursting with song—to promote the March program on grassland birds. "By advertising more, we may attract new members," Diane says. Among the programs scheduled for this year is a possible late summer field trip to look at area hedgerows.

A resident of Tincum for 30 years, Diane had been asked several times to join the TC board, but other commitments kept her from accepting. This time the timing was right. Her involvement in birding dovetails nicely with the Conservancy's work, she says. "Birding is a great partner with conservation. Birds are 'the canary in the coal mine.' When the bird population starts changing, you know something is changing in the environment." She points to the ruffed grouse as an example. The grouse, once plentiful in the area, is no longer found here, because the birds need forest understory for their habitat, and much of the understory has been eaten by the large population of white-tailed deer.

A dedicated outdoor enthusiast, Diane, who works in microbiological quality assurance for Johnson & Johnson, has added biking to her list of activities. About a year ago,

she and her husband started biking, in part so Dave could lose weight. When 25 pounds melted off over several months of riding, he decided on another challenge: an annual charity ride at the Shore for multiple sclerosis. "We signed up for the 45-miler because we didn't know how hard it would be or how good a shape we would be in," she says. Their rigorous training on the hills of Tincum made the 45 flat miles at the Shore a breeze. "As it turns out, we could have done 75 miles."

**"Man has been endowed with reason,  
with the power to create,  
so that he can add to what he's been given.  
But up to now he hasn't been a creator,  
only a destroyer.  
Forests keep disappearing,  
rivers dry up, wild life's become extinct,  
the climate's ruined and the land  
grows poorer and uglier every day."**

**- Anton Chekhov**

- Article by Dianna Sinovic/Photo by Dave Allison

## EARTH



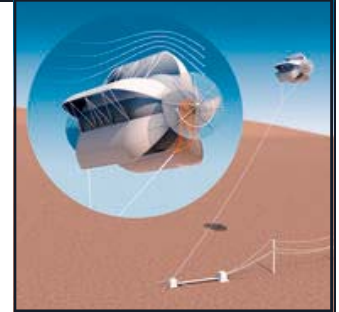
Did you know that the hedgerows that border fields are of great ecological importance? It is called the “edge effect” — where there is greater diversity of species than can be found singly in

woods or field. Hedgerows provide food and shelter for many different forms of wildlife: butterflies and other insects, birds, voles, mice, foxes, hares, and weasels. Shelter comes from the undergrowth of shrubs and brambles interspersed with small trees, rotting logs for insects, and leaf mold for rodents. Abandoned birds’ nests become winter habitat for mice. Birdlife in hedgerows can be prolific. Indigo buntings nest in the tangle of raspberry and blackberry briars. Robins, thrushes, and vireos use the thick branches of the dogwood tree, and greenbrier attracts cardinals, mockingbirds, thrashers, and catbirds.

To learn more about how you can make your hedgerows provide habitat for wildlife, come to the Tincum Conservancy program on hedgerows, given by David Hughes of Fringetree Design, scheduled for Saturday, August 9. Check our website for more details.

– Article by Karen Budd/Photo by Kathleen Connally

## WIND



For centuries people have attempted to tap into the free and mighty power of the wind. Its mercurial nature, though, has made inventions like the windmill helpful but unreliable energy partners. Now there is new hope on the horizon. In December, the *New York Times Magazine* published its “7<sup>th</sup> Annual Year in Ideas” issue, in which it looks back on the “curious, inspired, perplexing, and sometimes outright illegal innovations” of the past 12 months. One such featured item was “airborne wind turbines.” Taking advantage of the constant breeze blowing at 1,000 feet up, Magenn Power has developed a lighter-than-air wind turbine capable of powering an entire village. Other earth-friendly ideas in this issue, such as “bio-degradable coffins,” may provoke controversy but certainly give food for thought to anyone who looks to leave a smaller footprint on our planet.

To read more about wind turbines and other intriguing inventions, go to: [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/09/magazine/09\\_1\\_turbine.html?ref=magazine](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/09/magazine/09_1_turbine.html?ref=magazine)

– Article by Kris Becker

## FIRE

Who doesn’t remember the delicious smell of burning leaves as one of childhood’s wonderful experiences? The aroma of wood smoke still engages our senses in a delightful way. To combat the growing problem of air pollution and related health problems, though, we must understand the reality of the effect of smoke on air quality. The Department of Environmental Protection publishes a fact sheet on Open Burning of Residential Trash in Pennsylvania (2700-FS-2492 Rev. 2/2007), which encourages citizens to consider alternatives to burning. “Because of the potential health and fire risks to open burning, DEP strongly recommends that you recycle and reuse as much of your trash as possible or take it to a licensed landfill or municipal incinerator,” the fact sheet says. Open burning of “household waste” is not regulated by the DEP if the waste is “domestic refuse” and the burning occurs at private residences where not more than two families are living. Items not considered “domestic refuse” include demolition waste, insulation, shingles, treated wood, paint, painted or stained objects or furniture, tires, mattresses, box springs, metal, insulating coating on wire, television sets and appliances, automobiles, automotive parts, batteries, PVC products, and waste oil and other petroleum products.

Let’s care for our air: Reduce, recycle, and reuse.

– Article by Peggy Enoch/Photo by Kathleen Connally



## WATER

What is a watershed? You’re sitting in a watershed now. It’s the area of land that catches rain and snow and drains into a marsh, stream, river, lake, or groundwater. Homes, farms, forests, small towns, and big cities make up watersheds. Some are millions of square miles; others are just a few acres. Just as creeks drain into rivers, watersheds are nearly always part of a larger watershed. Virtually every stream, lake, river, and aquifer in this country is used as a drinking water source. Protecting source waters from contaminants is a major national priority to protect public health by ensuring a clean, safe drinking water supply, especially if you have a well.

Creating and maintaining a masterpiece of a lawn requires a significant amount of chemicals and water. Runoff from a lawn sprinkler can wash lawn chemicals, pet waste, and other pollutants directly into watersheds; the residue of soap and wax from washing your car has a similar effect.

Go to: [www.conservationinformation.org](http://www.conservationinformation.org) You can enter your ZIP code, see your watershed, and find more information on what you can do to protect it.

– Article by Betsi Campbell



Bucks County watershed in red

# CRITTER CORNER

## GRASSLAND BIRDS

On mornings in mid-May, when Tinicum is alive with bird song, you may be fortunate enough to hear the rolling, bubbling, R2-D2-like sound of the bobolink, one of Pennsylvania's more uncommon birds. Easily identified by sight as well as song, the bobolink is North America's only bird that is black underneath and white on the back. Each spring the bobolink migrates 6,000 miles from Argentina to breed in grasslands of the United States and Canada.



**Bobolink**

Tinicum's hayfields and meadows are home to a number of species of grassland birds in addition to the bobolink. Many of these, such as the eastern meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, and savannah sparrow, are considered of "special conservation concern" by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and conservation organizations like Partners in Flight. In the Eastern United States, grassland bird populations have declined 80 percent in the last 25 years primarily because of development-related loss of habitat. Even among remaining fields, these species face increasing pressures because of earlier and closer hay-cropping. In addition to providing habitat for these birds of spring and summer, meadows and hayfields serve as winter feeding grounds for other species of concern including the northern harrier (marsh hawk) and the endangered short-eared owl.

One way to help maintain these declining contributors to Tinicum's biodiversity is to delay the initial mowing of hayfields until mid-July, after the first set of young have fledged, and eliminate late season mowing, which allows more standing vegetation for winter residents.

Information on the grassland species that nest in Tinicum is available online at [www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds). This site even allows you to listen to each species' song. That way, as you take a few moments to appreciate the beauty of Tinicum this spring, you can key in on those uncommon grassland birds.

—Article by Jeff Keller

**"Suburbia is where the developer bulldozes out the trees, then names the streets after them."  
- Bill Vaughn**

# THE GREEN THUMB

## MAKING A MEADOW

A growing number of people, including many with only a few acres of property, are converting lawn or little used agricultural land to meadow. The reasons often have to do with lower maintenance costs—it can cost \$1,000 per acre per year to maintain a well-manicured, lush-looking lawn. Besides saving money and reducing air and water pollution, and gasoline consumption, some residents enjoy the grasses and wildflowers that can be introduced, as well as the butterflies that follow.

Should you decide to naturalize a portion of your property, the first thing to decide is "what am I managing for?" Aesthetics? Butterflies? Grassland birds? Cost savings? If it's the last, you may choose just to mow some areas away from your house less often. If your motivation is something else, then what you plant will depend on your goals.

You can find information on websites of seed suppliers like Ernst Conservation Seeds and Prairie Nursery that will guide you through the steps of preparing a seed bed, seeding, and establishing a meadow. If aesthetics and butterflies are your goals, a mix of perennial native grasses and wildflowers works best. Be sure to include native cool season grasses to get some green in the spring and fall. Cool season grasses are adapted to grow in the cooler months at the beginning and end of the growing season. For staying green in the heat of the summer and beautiful in fall color, native warm season grasses (WSGs) are a good choice. Be aware that some WSGs grow to 4 to 7 feet. So, you may want to use these away from the house, if at all. Also, be aware that many native wildflowers are eagerly eaten by deer. Therefore, you may want to plant wildflowers in limited areas where you can easily see them, as well as spray them with deer repellent. Check with suppliers for recommendations on less deer-palatable species.

Because of the overabundance of deer, it is difficult to create and maintain a native meadow with a balance of grasses and wildflowers suitable for breeding grassland birds. Deer don't eat WSGs, and thus these grasses come to dominate many native meadows. The result, although often attractive, is a meadow that develops too late in the breeding season to be used for nesting (cont. on pg. 11)



**Northern Harrier**

# CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT: Roaring Rocks/Swamp Creek

Nineteen special birds! Marbled salamanders! Pollution-sensitive creek critters! Rare and endangered plants! Thirteen vernal pools! This little 2,500-acre watershed has them all.

Scientists contracted by the Conservancy under a Wild Resources Conservation Program grant have completed their biodiversity research in this corner of the Pennsylvania Highlands, bordered by Upper Tincum Church, Swamp Creek, and Permanent School roads. Thanks to Drs. Ann Rhoads and Tim Block, Marlin Korn, Phil Perhamus, Scott Grossman, Devich Farbotnik, and Dr. Marion Kyde for the field research; to Diane Rosenkrantz for the mapping, and to Suzanne Forbes for background and compilation. A copy of the report is available in the TC office.



Marbled salamander

Three hundred sixty-seven plant species, including the rare water pimpernel and heath aster, form the plant communities. Eighty percent are native (63 percent is the state average). The stream itself supports all three classes of pollution-sensitive insects – mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies – and its water quality is excellent. Snakes, frogs, and salamanders are well represented (25 species), including the endangered marbled

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The Tincum Conservancy is sponsoring another year of Conservation Spotlight Programs, highlighting some of the reasons for the Conservancy's preservation efforts. Please join us!

### 1 p.m. April 27: "Sheep to Shawl"

Marlene Halstead will discuss wool production, harvesting the wool, and the use of the wool to create products. Marlene will show us her method for shearing sheep, and participants will be able to give it a try!

Dress accordingly, and carpool if possible. **Limit: 20 people.** To register, call Diane Allison, 610-847-2085.



### 10 a.m. June 7: "Lenape Lands"

Shelley DePaul will lead this program on a conserved property that was once a Lenape campground. Shelley will bring us closer to the Lenape with a drumming demonstration and stories

from the Lenape tradition. It's a wonderful mix of place and culture, so don't miss this exciting window into the Lenape way of life. For meeting location/information, call Diane Allison, 610-847-2085.

### 10 a.m. August 9: "Hedgerows - An Icon of Bucks County's Rural Vernacular Landscape"

David Hughes of Fringetree Design Studios, LLC, will share some of his observations on how hedgerows were created, what native species are common to them, and what invasive species threaten our hedgerows. He will also discuss the functions and ecological values that existing hedgerows provide and offer some thoughts on how to best preserve these unique landscape features. David will draw on local and regional examples to show the splendor of our hedgerows. Program at Christ Lutheran Church, 353 E. Dark Hollow Rd., Pipersville. For more information, call Diane Allison, 610-847-2085.



salamander, whose habitat is disappearing across its historic range. Baby box turtles indicate that reproduction is healthy here; box turtles are in trouble in many parts of the state. One hundred eleven bird species nest in the canopy and understory. Nineteen of these are species for which Pennsylvania has a special responsibility; several are on the threatened/endangered list. Three uncommon bats – long-eared, hoary, and Eastern red – all of greatest conservation concern and legally protected in the state, live here. Black bears and bobcats utilize the watershed, along with numerous smaller mammals. The list of over 80 mushrooms reflects the richness of the tree community.

Copies of the report with its management recommendations have been given to the township and the county, and to all the landowners who allowed our scientists access. TC thanks Norm MacArthur, Bill Novak, Stuart Loudon, Richard and Madeline Zaveta, Les Schuman, Mark and Joan Stevens, Boyce and Karen Budd, and Tary Leonard (the Rутtenberg property) for their generous cooperation with the research team. To view the full report, go to: [www.buckscountyherald.com/BCH](http://www.buckscountyherald.com/BCH) links

- Article by Marion Kyde/Photo by Marlin Corn

(cont. from pg. 10) by grassland birds.

## THE GREEN THUMB

If you have five or more acres not already being managed for hay and wish to encourage these uncommon birds, plant a traditional commercial "hay" mix from Agway. The combination of old world cool season grasses plus alfalfa in these mixes works well for most of the grassland birds in our region, and still allows for late season hay cropping. Leaving a meadow standing through the winter helps provide habitat for a variety of wildlife.

If you only mow annually, mow the meadow in late winter while the ground is still firm enough for mowing equipment or wait until late April, when the soil dries out a bit, but before birds begin nesting.

Jeff Keller has a doctorate in wildlife ecology from Cornell University and works as a restoration ecologist. He has designed and installed hundreds of acres of native meadow for public and private interests. Jeff serves on TC's Board of Trustees.



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Photos by Kathleen Connally

## HOME GROWN

**Farm fresh food is more nutritious and delicious. And land that is being used for agricultural production is land that is not being developed. Here are some sources of local agricultural products:**

**Apitthikan Farm**

611 Cafferty Rd, UBE, PA  
(610) 847-8535  
Orchard grass, raw milk, eggs, cheese, maple syrup, dried chanterelles, ironwork  
Open 8am-4pm m-f

**Gruver's Farm Stand**

Dark Hollow Road near Ervin Road  
(215) 766-8616  
Seasonal fruits and vegetables  
Plants and holiday greens  
Open May through December

**Lewis Sweet Corn**

River Road, South of Frenchtown Bridge  
(610) 294-9316 for bulk orders  
Sweet corn and seasonal vegetables  
Open July through September

**Peace Valley Lavender Farm**

802 North Galena Road, Doylestown  
(215) 249-8462

PeaceValleyLavender.com  
All things lavender: bath, body, home  
Open Thur-Sun year round

**Penn Vermont Fruit Farm**

Rolling Hills Road off Route 113  
Bedminster  
(215) 795-2475  
Seasonal fruits, vegetables & cider  
Honey & maple syrup year round

**Plumstead Grange Farm Market**

Route 611 & Keller's Church Road  
Plumsteadville  
(215) 766-0707  
Local farmers market for produce, baked goods, jams, candles, honey and more.  
Open Saturdays, 9-12, June-Oct.

**Purely Farm**

55B Municipal Road, Pipersville  
(215) 317-0889  
purelyfarm@verizon.net

Pre-order organically fed chicken, lamb, pork & turkey  
Eggs year round

**Rick's Egg Farm**

4917 Durham Road, Kintnersville  
(610) 847-5322  
Hormone & anti-biotic free milk and eggs  
Open year round

**Sand Castle Winery**

River Road, Erwinna  
(800) 722-9463  
Estate Bottled, 100% vinifera wines grown on premises  
Open daily

**Schneiderwind Farm & Nursery**

River Road at the Frenchtown Bridge  
(610) 982-5460  
Seasonal fruits, vegetables  
Plants & flowers  
Open May through October

**Tintinhull Farm**

462 Headquarters Road  
Maple Syrup  
Open year round

**Trauger's Farm Market**

Route 611, Kintnersville  
(610) 847-5702  
Seasonal produce, dairy, eggs, jellies  
Open year round

To be added or removed  
from this list, please contact  
the Tinicum Conservancy  
at  
newsletter@tinicumconservancy.org



**THINK GLOBALLY,  
BUY LOCALLY**  
For more local  
producers, go to:  
[www.buylocalpa.org](http://www.buylocalpa.org)  
and  
[www.buyfreshnwj.org](http://www.buyfreshnwj.org)

