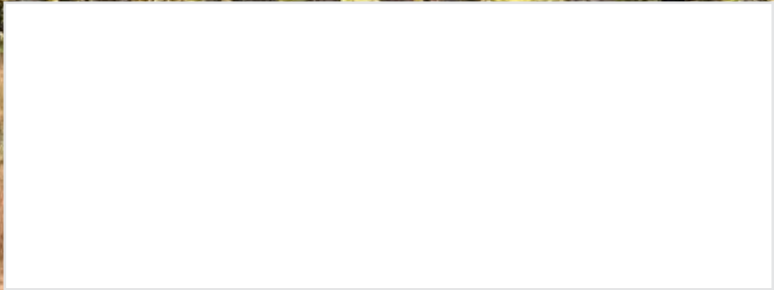




P.O. Box 206  
Erwinna, PA 18920

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
DOYLESTOWN, PA  
PERMIT NO. 20



WINTER 2023

# COMMON GROUND

*"Protecting our rural character and natural resources through community-based land conservation."*



*Photo credit: Jane Lindley*

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### Easement Monitors

Interested in volunteering outdoors? We are required by our National Land Trust Accreditation to monitor every conservation easement property on an annual basis. We're always seeking volunteers to help us achieve our goals. Comfort with hiking, talking to neighbors and simple computer skills a must.

Contact Kelly Germann at 610-294-1077 or email [kgermann@tinicumconservancy.org](mailto:kgermann@tinicumconservancy.org) to talk more about this opportunity.

### Volunteer Coordinator

Do you enjoy interacting with people and inspiring others? Help take the Conservancy to another level by engaging potential volunteers and connecting them to their greatest skills and interests.

*Interested in learning more about volunteering?*  
Contact Conservancy's Executive Director Jim Engel at 610-294-1077 or [jengel@tinicumconservancy.org](mailto:jengel@tinicumconservancy.org)

### Office Assistant

Come help us keep the heart of the Conservancy going strong. A wide variety of opportunities exists for almost anyone here at the Conservancy office. Help with mailings, filing, computer inputting, distributing newsletters and many other important and rewarding projects.

*Interested in learning more about volunteering?*  
Contact Maria Fell at 610-294-1077 or [mfell@tinicumconservancy.org](mailto:mfell@tinicumconservancy.org)

### Event Assistant

Calling all party animals and social butterflies! We need your help planning and coordinating the Conservancy's public events and gatherings, such as our annual Community Celebration, our Outdoor Movie Night, and more.

*Interested in learning more about volunteering?*  
Contact Conservancy's Executive Director Jim Engel at 610-294-1077 or [jengel@tinicumconservancy.org](mailto:jengel@tinicumconservancy.org)

## A New Life For An Historic Farm

About a year ago, Jane Lindley and Peter Pinardi stumbled upon a sprawling property for sale in Tinicum. It included 49.5 acres, a 173-year-old house that had been vacant for two years, numerous overgrown pastures, an assortment of some 20+ sheds, chicken coops, and barns, and a 400-pound pig named Brody. A "project property" of this magnitude wasn't exactly what Jane and Peter had envisioned for themselves when they first talked about moving from Washington State. "I could have been perfectly happy in an apartment in New Hope," Jane quipped. But there

were a lot of things about the property that spoke to them. A former owner, Catherine Price, had permanently protected it with a conservation easement in 2000, and as an agricultural property under the "Clean and Green" Act 319, it received tax benefits. Perhaps more importantly, Jane had grown up in Tinicum and her mother, now in her 90's, still lives here. So, they wanted to be nearby and felt a personal connection to Tinicum. "The property just kept calling to us," Jane says, "and Pete had a vision of returning it to nature. He really drove us to buy it."

Soon after purchasing the property, they began putting plans in place to let the well-used land rest. While simultaneously living in and renovating the historic house (which is a considerable project in and of itself), their first order of business was restoring the land's natural habitat and open space and inviting the local wildlife back. That meant rehoming many unneeded outbuildings and fences that peppered and dissected the land. It will come as no surprise to those of us who already call Tinicum home that Pete and Jane soon found a very warm and welcoming

*continued on pg. 2*



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- Neal Feigles, President
- Kelly Simcox, Vice President
- Peggy Enoch, Secretary
- Michael Kauffman, Treasurer
- John Clement
- John Courtney
- Debra Goldstein
- Jeff Keller
- Mark Manchester
- Mark Petty
- Wendy Ullman

**STAFF**

- Jim Engel, Executive Director
- Kelly Germann, Resource Protection Mgr.
- Scott Berman, Resource Protection Asst.
- Maria Fell, Office Manager

Tinicum Conservancy  
 965 River Road  
 P.O. Box 206  
 Erwinna, PA 18920

610-294-1077  
 fax: 610-294-2906

info@tinicumconservancy.org  
 www.tinicumconservancy.org



The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

The Tinicum Conservancy is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization established in 1992. Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

**STAY CONNECTED WITH NEWS & EVENTS**

- Sign up for email news at [tinicumconservancy.org](http://tinicumconservancy.org)
- Like us on Facebook
- Follow us on Instagram



Photo credit: Jane Lindley



Before



After

*A New Life... (cont. from pg. 1)*

community here. Soon they were connecting with neighbors and community groups and working with experienced shed movers to help prepare, lift and transport the outbuildings. Today, those chicken coops and hog sheds dot the lands of several appreciative farmers from Coopersburg to Lewisburg, PA. Next came opening up the old pastures, which involved hand-pulling thousands of wire staples and a tractor-assist to remove fence posts and hundreds of yards of wire fencing — also to be rehomed.

And then there was Brody. All the other animals that had previously lived there had found good homes by the time Pete and Jane first saw the property. But Brody was still lounging in his pig barn. Not expecting much as they approached and called out his name, they were startled and very charmed to see

him prick his ears and come running for their attention... all 400 pounds of him. Happily, he now has a new home on a farm near Jane's mother.

Surrounded by 30 acres of meadow and forest, 15 acres of former cattle pastures will be managed as hay fields to maintain the property's agricultural-use status under Act 319. Since their conservation easement is flexible enough to accommodate different uses over time, for now they look forward to welcoming a diversity of wildlife while the land relaxes, groundwater recharges, and the soil microbial biome replenishes itself.

Please join Tinicum Conservancy in welcoming Pete and Jane as new members and easement landowners dedicated to restoring and protecting the natural beauty of our regional community.

## 7 Great Ways to Help the Tinicum Conservancy

### 1. FOREVER CUTS BOTH WAYS

We may want to live in perpetuity, but our bodies have different ideas. Planned gifts protect our community — homes and property, bequests, and gifts of life insurance or stock endure forever. Some offer tax benefits. They're easy to make, not just for the wealthy, and they offer an opportunity to leave a legacy for the place you love. [tinicumconservancy.org/legacy-giving](http://tinicumconservancy.org/legacy-giving)

### 2. YOUR BOSS MAY BE MORE GENEROUS THAN YOU THINK

Many companies, big and small, match their employees' charitable gifts. A few in our area include Doylestown Health Foundation, Verizon, Bank of America, Weis Markets, Johnson & Johnson and Merck. Ask your human resources officer and double the impact of your tax-deductible contribution!

### 3. JOIN THE "IN CROWD"

They say you can spot a Conservancy member a mile away by the smile on their face and the spring in their step. Putting your love of our landscapes and vistas into personal action with a membership gift of \$100, \$500 or \$1,000 strengthens our ability to continue the important mission of the Conservancy. Join more than 600 of your neighbors by becoming a Tinicum Conservancy member today. [tinicumconservancy.org/donate](http://tinicumconservancy.org/donate)

### 4. DO US A FAVOR

Already a member? Want to give something extra meaningful to a friend or loved one? Consider a Conservancy gift membership or a donation in honor or memory of a friend, family member or beloved pet. Your thoughtful gesture will be announced by a handsome card. Truly a gift that keeps on giving! [tinicumconservancy.org/donate](http://tinicumconservancy.org/donate)

### 5. DONATE SOMETHING ONLY YOU CAN

Nobody's making any more land or open space, but whether it's ten acres or a hundred, easement land will stay open and undeveloped forever. 120 of your neighbors have already given a conservation easement, but we need many more to lock in what makes our area so beautiful. (To learn more, read the interview on page 4.) [tinicumconservancy.org/land-protection](http://tinicumconservancy.org/land-protection)

### 6. PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

Did you hear? Volunteering is the new couch-surfing. Hundreds of your friends and neighbors are doing it — serving on TC event committees, joining River Road clean-ups, helping to build trails on newly conserved land or assembling mailings in our office. Outdoors or indoors, volunteering is a great way to meet new people and experience the satisfaction of giving even an hour of time and talent to a cause you care about. [tinicumconservancy.org/volunteer](http://tinicumconservancy.org/volunteer)

### 7. MONTHLY DONATIONS

Looking for a way to support the Conservancy but hate writing a big annual check? Become a sustaining member and make a monthly contribution. There are several suggested amounts offered on the website, just click on the amount and then check "Make this a monthly donation" to set up automatic payments.



*"We discovered Tinicum somewhat by accident while looking for a place to escape from NYC where we've lived for years. It was love at first sight, so much so that we left NYC altogether. We quickly got to know Jim Engel and many others from the Conservancy, and what became clear to us is that the Conservancy's mission is entwined with why Tinicum is such a special place. It's our love for Tinicum that binds us to the Conservancy. That's why we joined the Conservancy shortly after we arrived here."*

– Stuart Hirsch & Brooke Bassin



*"My family has roots in Ottsville and Tinicum dating back to 1745. There's no better way for me to honor that, and perpetuate that singular beauty, than by supporting the Tinicum Conservancy."*

– Caroline Haney



*"These monthly contributions help the Conservancy to plan their budgets knowing that each month they can expect to receive your donation. It also allows us to make a big contribution spread out through the year."*

– Craig deGroot & Gerwin Janssen





# Thinking of Conserving Your Land? Here's What to Know

An Interview with Jim Engel, Executive Director

In its 31-year history, Tincum

Conservancy has preserved 5,100 acres and facilitated 120 conservation easements — 50 of them during Jim Engel's tenure as Executive Director. It's an impressive amount, but it's just a fraction of the open spaces in Tincum, Bridgeton and Nockamixon townships that qualify for easement protection. Many more are needed to protect our area's extraordinary beauty. We asked Jim why that is.

**We've got more than 60 square miles of land in our three townships. Why is so little of it protected by conservation easements?**

Well, I think most people aren't sure what a conservation easement entails, aren't clear about the financial benefits of a conservation easement, or are unsure of an easement's impact on their property value. And others may not fully appreciate the importance of easements to sustaining the rural character and open spaces of our communities.

**What can the Conservancy do about that?**

First, we need to help more people realize they may be qualified to donate an easement and that the Conservancy is here to guide them through the process. They also need to know it's one of the easiest and best ways to leave a personal legacy of protected land, because easements remain intact even when a property is sold or transferred to family members. And after an easement is in place, landowners can continue to enjoy their property just as they did before the agreement was in place.

**Does every property have enough land, or the kind of land, to qualify for an easement?**

For a surprisingly large number of landowners, the answer is yes. We do have a list of criteria, which is summarized in this newsletter. But that shouldn't stop anyone from reaching out to me or our staff to find out for sure. We're always happy to talk with landowners about their property and what options are available, and of course there's no obligation involved with making a phone call or scheduling a visit.

**Give me a few examples of the kind of property you'd most like to see protected with a conservation easement.**

We love land that contains wetlands, streams and other water-related functions. Land with high quality farm soil or large, contiguous forests is also very important. Properties adjacent to a public preserve, another easement, or part of a scenic viewshed definitely pique our interest.

**Are there property characteristics that would make an easement less desirable?**

We don't like to discourage anyone from pursuing an easement because we never know until we see the land in question, but there are situations where an easement might not be appropriate. For example, land that has no significant natural resources or that's next to a site already slated for development. Sometimes properties with multiple owners can make the easement process complex, but that's the kind of thing we can help guide owners through in the initial stages. Properties that contain hazardous waste are not acceptable.

**What are the financial incentives to donate an easement?**

I'm glad you asked because there are many! For example, a donor can claim a tax deduction on an easement valued at up to 50 percent of their adjusted gross income. Let's say you donate the development rights of a property valued at \$400,000 and you have an income of \$50,000 a year. You could deduct \$25,000 in the year of the donation and in each of the next 15 years. That means you could fully realize the value of your donation over that 15-year period. Landowners with high income or capital gains can realize the full benefit in an even shorter period of time, and qualifying farmers and ranchers can deduct up to 100 percent of their income. It's a nice reward for doing a great thing, plus the value of those deductions can help with future medical expenses, retirement dreams, establishing a college fund or any unanticipated expenses. From a financial planning point of view, donating an easement is a very smart strategy. Of course, every situation varies so discussing yours with a tax professional is essential.

**Can a landowner receive a cash payment for establishing a conservation easement?**

In some cases, a landowner can receive a payment for a portion of the development rights restricted in the conservation easement. This will depend on where they live, the size of the property, and the quality of the conservation values on the property or farm. Just ask and we can review what options may be available.

**What if a donor changes their mind?**

The underlying concept of a conservation easement is "perpetuity." It protects the land forever and is therefore irrevocable. But that shouldn't scare anybody. So few of the things we value are truly permanent; the precious land you steward today as an owner is one of the most important legacies you can establish.

**What should an interested person do next?**

Call or email me directly at 610-294-1077 or [jengel@tincumconservancy.org](mailto:jengel@tincumconservancy.org) and we can discuss the details of a conservation easement and whether it makes sense for you and your family. There is no obligation, and the consultation is free.

— Dennis Lonergan

## Why Land Protection?

Because all life depends on land and water, preservation plays a critical role in our future. Conservation easements benefit our community in myriad ways because they:

- protect our water supply
- maintain our rural character and reduce sprawl and traffic
- protect beautiful landscapes
- keep agricultural land in production and farms in business
- ensure a steady supply of local, healthy food
- protect wildlife habitat
- moderate property taxes, as development can cost taxpayers more in government services than it generates in new tax revenue

## Conservancy Annual Community Celebration



Jim Engel, Executive Director, sharing the Conservancy's latest news

Despite the weather, we had over 100 people attend the event in the old barn at the conserved 62-acre Black Sheep Farm. A special thank-you goes out to everyone who attended — and if you couldn't be there, we hope you'll join us next year!



The Scott family



Kate Galer, Phil and Judy Lewis



left to right: John Clement, Trustee, Ray Albergotti, Andre Becker, Dennis Lonergan, and John Graves



Adriana Comprelli and former president Boyce Budd



Office Manager Maria Fell and Mike Kauffman, Trustee



Louis Dierking and Wendy Ullman, Trustee & former PA State Representative



Mark Manchester, Trustee, and Kate Galer



Cindi Gasparre, event coordinator, displays delicious food



Beech Leaf Disease: Are American beech trees next? We hope not!

Just as we are mourning the loss of our beloved ash trees to the ravages of the emerald ash borer, a new threat to our forest and specimen trees is emerging. Beech Leaf Disease (BLD) is spreading fast, but if we educate ourselves and each other quickly, we can spare our forests and woodlands a second devastating hit. Please keep reading and pass this along!

BLD was discovered in Ohio in 2012 and has moved quickly to Ontario, Canada and nine eastern states, including PA, NJ, MD and NY. It has moved so quickly that little is known about what causes it or how to manage it, but it's been shown to kill young beech trees within 2 years and mature beech within 6-7 years of infection. BLD primarily affects American beech, *F. grandifolia*, which is easily identified by its smooth, light gray bark, often carved into by young sweethearts, and also used by indigenous peoples who sculpted cultural symbols, called arborglyphs, into the bark. However, BLD has also been observed on European beech (aka copper beech), *F. sylvatica*; Oriental beech, *F. orientalis*; and Chinese beech, *F. engleriana*.

**What causes it:** To the best of researchers' knowledge, BLD is spread by a leaf-dwelling nematode, which is a microscopic worm, and possibly caused by a pathogen (or pathogens) that the nematode carries. The nematode overwinters in the beech tree buds. In the spring, the leaves show signs of damage, or the buds don't leaf out at all. While science is still inconclusive on where the nematode came from or how it moves from tree to tree and site to site, it is believed that birds and the transportation of contaminated plants may be involved.

**What to look for:** Infection is quite visible, especially on American beech. BLD causes a distinctive dark green banding between the veins on the beech leaves. The banding is best seen when leaves are backlit against a bright sky. The tops of leaves will appear leathery, crinkled, curled and/or distorted. The tell-tale banding is somewhat less obvious on European and Oriental beech, but the distorted leaves will be present.



Distinctive dark green banding between the veins of the leaves



Tops of leaves will appear leathery, crinkled, curled and/or distorted



Dead cells between veins and unhealthy leaves  
Photo credits: Emelie Swackhammer

**What to do:** Because BLD is not yet regulated by the PA Dept of Agriculture, there is no requirement to report it. However, our regional service foresters are collecting data. If you find BLD-infected beech trees, please report your findings to your local Service Forester. In Bucks, that's Harris Nowotarski at 610-428-1086 or hnowotarsk@pa.gov. For other counties, see Managing Your Woods (pa.gov)

**What is being done:** At this time, there is no known management or cure. However, several experimental treatments are under study. Although not economical for large

beech stands, treatment of individual beech trees with a phosphite fertilizer drench has shown early positive effects if administered correctly by a landowner or arborist. Phosphite drench supports and boosts the tree's natural health and defenses. Several restricted-use pesticides for use against the culprit nematode are also under study.

For more information, visit the "Resources" page on our website, which has links to many helpful articles about BLD as well as other invasive pests that affect our Township.

[tinicumconservancy.org/resources](http://tinicumconservancy.org/resources)



The Tinicum Township Environmental Advisory Committee is planning the 2nd Annual Earth Day Fair to be held Sunday April 21, 2024 at Tinicum Township Community Park, Tohickon Valley Road, behind Cooper Mechanical on 611. Time of day to be determined.

The free event will feature live music, green vendors and organizations, refreshments, activities for children and adults, and door prizes. Bring a picnic and enjoy the festivities.



Thank You

**David and Michelle Bader, Neal and Heidi Feigles and Travis and Megan Hutchison** for hosting Conservancy education programs at their beautiful properties.

**Diane Allison and Jeff Keller** for leading our education programs in 2023.

**Nancy Bousum, Bill Cahill and Robin Lochner** for helping coordinate our stewardship walks.

**Janine Black and Barry Arkles and Joe and Marylou Quinlan** for graciously hosting a small group of Conservancy supporters at their beautiful homes.

**Carol Cassel, Claire Billingham, Corrinne Blaydon** and other members of the Tohickon Garden Club that have faithfully weeded & watered our native gardens through a difficult summer.

**Upper Tinicum Lutheran Church** for allowing us to park in their lot for one of our education programs.

**Bill and Ros Cahill and Wendy Ullman** for helping set-up and break down our Volunteer Appreciation Picnic in June.

**Cindi Gasparre** for stepping in to make sure the Conservancy Celebration event day was a great success.

**Bob Hanley and Tim Philpot** for hosting the Community Celebration enjoyed by more than 100 people.

**Gertraud Humphreys** for cheerful, detail oriented and invaluable office help with many administrative aspects within the Conservancy.

**Stuart Loudon** for allowing us to store our primary conservation records at his property for more than a decade.

**Chris Olbrich** and his team from Bucks County Park Maintenance for all the hard work keeping up with the outdoor maintenance of the Conservancy office building.

**Todd Quinby** and crew for their amazing effort to move our conservation documents and records to a new location.

**Ken Rogers** for his countless hours developing a new database of large properties we hope to conserve in the future.

**Luke Sorensen and Erin Range** for the talent and energy that they both exhibit as the chairs of the Tinicum and Nockamixon Township Open Space Committees, respectively.

**Tinicum Conservancy booth crew**, who greeted attendees at the Tinicum Arts Festival and answered their questions about the Conservancy.

**Wendy Szandrocha** for being the Chairperson (and fearless leader) of the Events Committee. Wendy is dedicated to making all our donor & volunteer events flow smoothly. From the initial planning & execution to parking cars, no task is too small for her attention to the success of the event.

**Rich Zaveta** for helping connect us with landowners interested in conserving their properties.