



P.O. Box 206
Erwinna, PA 18920

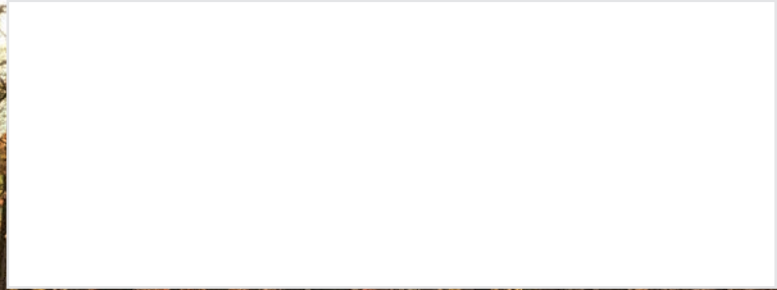
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FALL/WINTER 2020

COMMON GROUND

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



Late Autumn sunset over Turtle Rock conservation easement



Barnhurst Conservation Easement: A Diamond in the Middle of Green

Red Cliff Road along the newly conserved Barnhurst property

You can make a difference!

Leave a Legacy, Plan a Gift.

When you include the Conservancy in your estate plans, you help secure the future of our region's natural resources and rural character for future generations. Planning today extends your impact beyond your lifetime.

Get Involved — Volunteer! Tinicum Conservancy would not exist without its volunteers. We need help with mailings, research, event planning, and more! If you prefer the outdoors, we need folks to take part in our River Road cleanups.

Please contact Tinicum Conservancy trustee Karen Budd at (610) 294-9069 or email kbudd3030@gmail.com for questions and more information.

Double Your Impact with an Employer Matching Gift.

Maximize your Conservancy support with an employer matching gift. Many companies make it easy to double or triple the amount you donate! Check with your human resources department.

Conserve Your Property. Preserving your land is a lasting way to contribute to our community.

Please contact our executive director, Jim Engel, at 610-294-1077 or email jengel@tinicumconservancy.org for questions and a confidential discussion about your options and opportunities.



JOIN TODAY

Become a new member today and instantly **double your impact!** See details inside (pg.4) about a matching gift challenge from one of our generous donors that will make your gift double in size. Join today and help protect your community for your family and future generations.

Located on a hilltop near the Delaware River in northern Tinicum Township, the recently completed Barnhurst Conservation Easement is surrounded by a mosaic of conserved land protected by the Tinicum Conservancy. Tinicum Township helped purchase the conservation easement on this last remaining unprotected piece of land in this part of the township.

Bill and Suzanne Barnhurst started the easement process in 2019 and persevered in spite of the uncertainty caused by COVID-19. "We wanted to join our neighbors, like the Quinbys and many others, who set such a great example by conserving their land before us," explained Suzanne Barnhurst.

The Barnhursts originally purchased the property in 2004 and have lived here fulltime since September 2005. Before starting the easement process, they purchased a 6-acre lot to add to their larger parcel. This brought the total acreage to be conserved to 20 acres.

They love the rustic atmosphere and rugged terrain of the property, including

continued on pg. 3



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- Maria Fell, Office Manager

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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.

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NEAL'S NATURE NOTES

A letter from our President



In the last issue of Common Ground, I discussed why I feel protecting our community's open space is so important. This time, I thought I'd share a few encouraging signs that, despite what we're all going through as a community, our commitment to the Conservancy's core mission remains undaunted.

In fact, a recent survey by Project Keystone and Conservation Matters revealed that Pennsylvanians believe protecting open space during the time of the pandemic is just as important as ever, if not more so. 84% of those polled said that open space was important or very important to them and their families during the pandemic. Protecting wildlife and water quality also ranked very high in the study. Both Republicans and Democrats looked favorably on acquiring more open space. We've seen ample evidence of this sentiment in our own community. So I thought it might be a good time to share a few encouraging signs that, despite what we're all going through, your commitment to a higher quality of life still burns strong — as dependable as the seasons!

Here are just a few examples of what we've accomplished together in 2020:

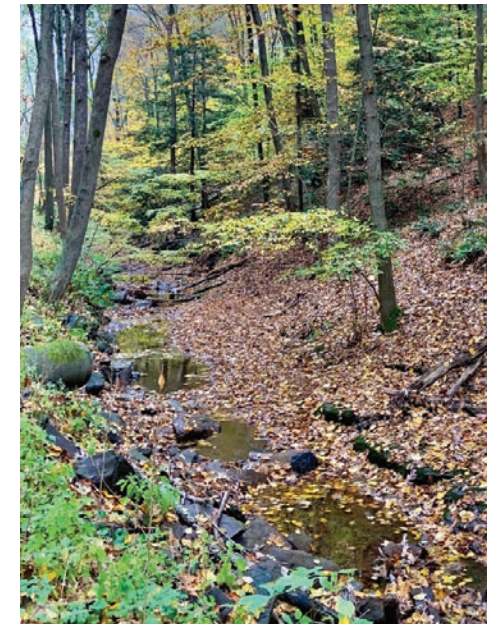
- Working with conservation minded landowners and Tinicum Township, we established three new conservation easements on two properties, putting us over the 5,000 acres milestone.
- Once it was safe to do so, our team of volunteer monitors came forward to help our natural resource staff complete the annual monitoring of all 115 of our conservation easements, a truly monumental task!
- 25 new donors chose to support our cause for the first time. (See our matching gift challenge in this issue to see how you can help.)
- Our office received an abundance of new inquiries from local residents seeking to learn about the benefits and rewards of preserving their land.

I didn't need to see a survey about conservation to know how important and essential clean water, abundant wildlife and local farms are to our community. Through your actions, you have shown your commitment to protect the natural resources and the rural character of our community.

And through your donations of time, money and talent, you've made it abundantly clear that the future of our community is in good hands. On behalf of everyone at the Conservancy, I want to thank you for your encouragement and ongoing support.

Happy Holidays,

—Neal Feigles



Barnhurst Easement

(cont. from pg. 1)

the ridgeline where their house sits, the Eastern Hemlock shaded hillsides and the stream that drains into the Delaware River along Red Cliff Road.

"We want this place to remain as it is," adds Suzanne.



WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP OUR EASEMENTS SAFE!

As part of our professional accreditation, we are required to keep two sets of our conservation easement records in two separate and secure locations. One of those locations is at local resident's property in two safes. The Conservancy member who has hosted these records for over a decade has asked us to move them to a new location as soon as possible.

Here's where you can help. Do you have a space for one or both of the safes? The location must be secure, dry and accessible to Conservancy representatives several times a year.

Safe #1: 43 1/4" wide by 65 1/2" high by 19" deep; **Safe #2:** 37 1/2" wide by 72 1/2" high by 25 3/4" deep.

Please contact Jim Engel for additional information and a discussion about helping us secure our conservation easements. Email jengel@tinicumconservancy.org or call 610-294-1077.

MISSION: POSSIBLE



**We've matched \$6,500
of an expanded
\$10,000
new-member matching
gift challenge thanks to
more than 30 new members!**

Photo by Cindi Satbra

JOIN TODAY and DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

Become a new supporter of the Tincum Conservancy and your gift will be matched dollar for dollar up to our newly expanded \$10,000 Challenge thanks to generous donors! Help keep our community healthy and beautiful. We've already succeeded in protecting 5,000 acres, and with your generous commitment to the Conservancy, you can help us protect the next 5,000 acres. Use the envelope provided or give safely and conveniently online at tincumconservancy.org. *Thank you.*



Conservancy Receives Professional Accreditation for the Third Time

In October, the Tincum Conservancy was awarded re-accreditation for the third time by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission (LTAC). We first achieved accreditation in 2009, joining a small national group of land trusts that hold this hard-earned seal of approval. In order to achieve accreditation, land trusts must submit detailed documentation of their policies, practices, and procedures — a truly rigorous process.

Following months of work by Conservancy volunteers and staff, our application was submitted and reviewed by the LTAC's professional accreditation staff and commissioners. Accreditation is not a one-time action. It's designed to foster continued improvement, as land trusts must apply for renewal every five to seven years, demonstrating continued development beyond where the organization stood during the previous review.

Just some of the aspects of our organization that were evaluated and determined to meet the LTAC's standards include:

- Ethical standards in general operation of the Conservancy
- Trustee accountability in governance of the Conservancy
- Financial stewardship accounting to ensure that contributions are used appropriately

- Honest communication with land donors about timing, costs, and requirements for the drafting and managing of easements

- Perpetual preservation of conserved land through monitoring with trained volunteers and protective action when necessary

- Accurate recordkeeping of critical easement information

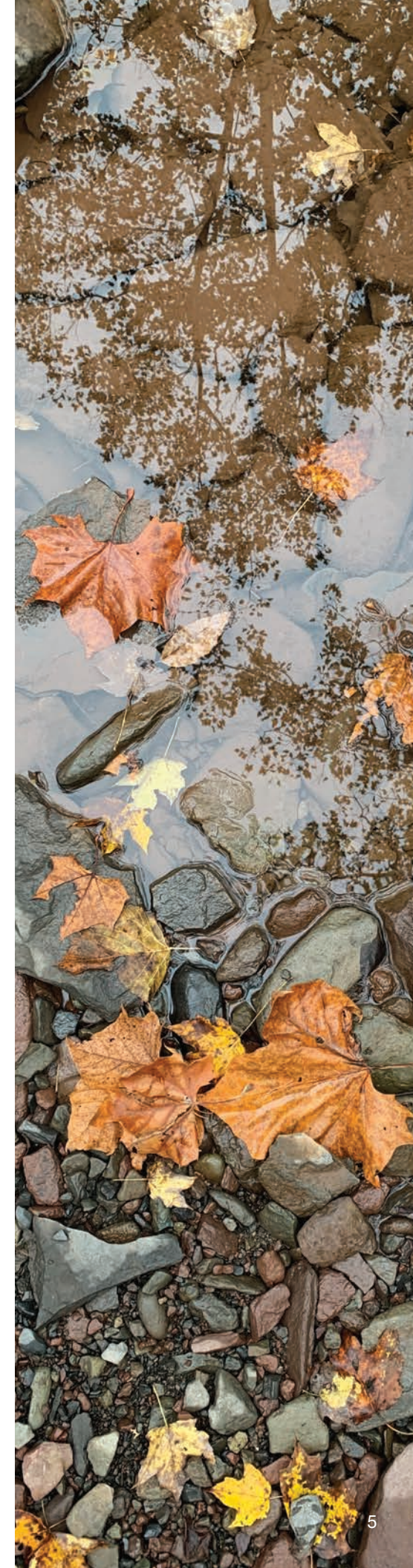
- Compliance with all laws and IRS regulations.

Our reaccreditation not only means that we've passed a very thorough external review, but it also provides objective proof that our organization is even stronger today than it was five years ago. This is an important milestone. It's further assurance to our stakeholders — members, supporters, volunteers, and all who live in and around our region — that the mission of the Conservancy, "to protect our rural character and natural resources through community-based land conservation," is held to the highest standards and that the organization is strong and sustainable.

Many thanks to Rick Bowles, Peggy Enoch and all those who gave their time and skills throughout the re-accreditation process. Not only did their expertise help us achieve this distinction, it leaves the Conservancy well-positioned for now and into the future.



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



The Spotted Lanternfly: Invasive, Unwelcome, Damaging and... Finally, Some Good News!



By now almost everyone knows the basics of this bad bug: It's a robust hopper from China (also Bangladesh and Vietnam); its first discovery in the US was in Berks County, PA (!) in 2014 and has moved quickly to New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia; it uses straw-like mouth parts to suck the life out of many valuable plants like fruit trees (and my poor cucumber vines all summer, thankyouverymuch), grape vines (ahem, they're messing with our WINE!), and a whole host of important timber trees that produce our paper, furniture and building materials, with impacts to the PA economy hurting to the tune of \$50 million annually (some estimates are up to 6x higher). As SLF feeds, it produces a sugary "honeydew" (entomological euphemism for bug-urine) that fosters black sooty mold on everything it drips onto below, which hopefully is not your favorite rosebush, kid's swing or garden bench. With striking red, black, yellow and white markings, SLF would actually be very pretty if it wasn't so vile.

Insect biologists all over the east coast are working diligently to find control and management methods. Homeowners and farmers are using sticky tree bands, (which can also catch and kill birds, squirrels, and bats so PLEASE cover them with a protective cage!) some DIY sprays and a few chemical pesticides. Birds don't seem to enjoy consuming them, and although predators including praying mantids, spiders and wheel bugs will munch them, this doesn't affect SLF populations much.

So, what's the Good News? Enter Killer Parasites and Fungi!

Biologists are working with parasitic insects that attack SLF eggs and nymphs. These are the same insects that keep SLF populations under control in China, so researchers have to be very careful what gets introduced to the US. One of these parasitoids is an insect that helped control US gypsy moth infestations in the early 2000's. These very tiny wasps lay their eggs in the egg-masses of SLF and voila! Baby wasp built-in brunch — although early studies haven't yet shown these parasitoid insects control SLF populations to a great degree.

More promising, researchers are working with a fungus that also helped control gypsy moths. *Beauveria bassiana* is a native soilborne fungus that attacks insects but is not harmful to birds or mammals (including humans). A current research project at Blue Marsh Lake Recreational Area in Berks County, led by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences and Cornell University, builds on positive results from a study conducted last year at Norristown Farm Park in Montgomery County. That study indicated the use of this native fungus can effectively control SLF populations. Part of the Blue Marsh Lake study will compare the use of this native fungus with a commonly used chemical pesticide (dinotefuran) and their effects on populations of non-target species, especially our native pollinators.

Penn State scientists continue work on other potential controls including methods to disrupt female SLF reproductive cycles, using natural insect predators and manipulating SLF feeding habits and habitat requirements. Finally, a 2020 development to get excited about! —*Kelly Germann*

For more info see: <http://www.stopslf.org/> and <https://www.agriculture.pa.gov> (search "Spotted lanternfly")

Kelly's CORNER:



Tincum Conservancy Easement Monitoring Program Goes "High-Tech"



With the conservancy's new Resource Protection Associate Scott Berman on board and much help from Trustee Mark Manchester (our technology guru) we've ushered in a new high-tech age. No more wasted ink and paper, getting lost in the woods, misplacing files or spending hours on one report.

Using a new computer program called "Avenza," we take digital maps on our Ipad with us into the field, where the magic of GPS turns us into a blue dot on the map. That blue dot indicates exactly where we are standing, follows along as we move, and makes a "track" showing us where we've been. Avenza allows us to take photos with the Ipad camera and place a marker on the map right where that photo was taken. Using the Ipad's keyboard or microphone, we

can type or speak a description of the photo for later use. Avenza also records a GPS location for every photo just in case we need to navigate our way back to that exact spot a year later. With these tools, we can find and walk virtually any boundary or property corner shown on our maps and photo-document anything of interest. We've been able to physically walk sections of properties we (and sometimes the landowners) have never found or seen before. We also can't get lost, or accidentally trespass where we don't belong.

Ever the skeptic and late-adopter, I insisted on bringing along my tried-and-true paper maps the first few times we tested Avenza in the field. Scott on his Ipad, me with my paper, we'd frequently check in with each other and compare our data. I must admit, the tech tools consistently outperform even MY fantastic map reading skills. I'm a convert!

Once we have completed a property visit and gathered our maps, photos and notes, we bring our Ipad back to the conservancy where our database has been upgraded in many ways (thanks to Mark Manchester) to process and save digital reports without ever generating a single piece of paper.

All these new methods bring much greater consistency, accuracy and efficiency to our property documentation and annual easement monitoring program. We look forward to sharing these tools with volunteer monitors and landowners when we are able to walk properties together again, safely.