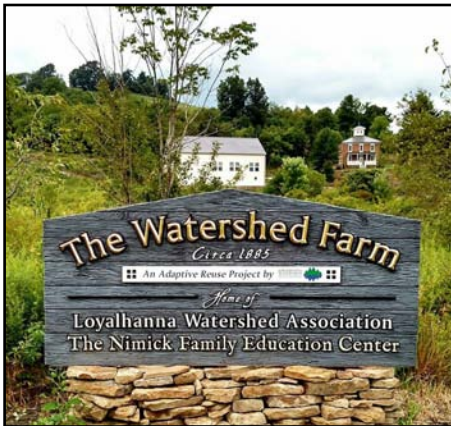


Currents

Fall 2016

An Exciting New Chapter for LWA!



It's been a stressful, emotional, exciting, hectic, and joyful few months here at LWA, and we would like to thank you all for that! Because of the support of more than 300 generous individuals and area foundations, our organization was given the unique opportunity to enhance all that we do, through utilizing something that we had, in a way that benefits more than just ourselves - a true gift.

The Watershed Farm Project first began six years ago on what was the former McConnaughey Family Farm. Deemed forgotten by many, the farm's acreage, habitats and buildings were still filled with potential. Thanks to strong partnerships with many local and national organizations, improvements to the farm began taking shape in 2012. New pasture fencing, watering systems, stream crossings, and riparian forested buffer plantings were added to return the farm to an active agriculture operation. We are pleased to have worked with Ken Reed, Jr, of Derry since 2014 on a seasonal Hereford cattle grazing operation on the

property. In addition, work continues with the PA Game Commission on improving sections of forested areas on the farm to optimize habitat for species of birds and other wildlife, and a walking trail to enjoy several of the farm's diverse habitats is currently being constructed.

A successful capital campaign led to the start of the site and building improvement phases of the project in 2014. Utilizing the talents of local contractors, site drawings designed by Benchmark Engineering and building plans designed by architect, Ellis Schmidlapp of LDA Architects, began to take shape. Work to improve the site near the buildings, including access and parking, utilities, landscaping and stormwater controls was completed by Neiderhiser Brothers Excavating. Structural work on the barn, which included re-building the entire bank-side wall of the foundation and all heavy timber repairs and additions, was completed by High Turr Farms, LLC. The



The farmhouse serves as LWA's new office.

project's general contractor, Fort Construction Group, completed all remaining project elements including interior and exterior repairs of both the farmhouse and barn in less than a year. We have been up and running at our new headquarters at 6 Old Lincoln Highway West, since June!

LWA has been pleased to host several programs and events this summer in the new facility and we look forward to many more in the upcoming months. We are happy to offer use of the Nimick Family Education Center in the barn to our community partners including public, private, civic, cultural, environmental, educational or charitable organizations at no cost. For more information on requesting use of the Center or to learn more about the project, contact the office at (724) 238-7560. Feel free to stop in and say hello during business hours or take a walk on the grounds at anytime. We hope to see you soon!



The Nimick Family Education Center in the barn.

First Year of Fourmile Run Restoration Project Completed



This log-framed cross vane with rock throat was installed to help narrow the channel and increase stream flow and oxygen in the water.

This spring, the PA Department of Environmental Protection awarded a \$328,000 Growing Greener Plus grant to LWA to construct stream restoration and fish habitat improvements on Fourmile Run, a trout stocked fishery located in the upper and middle watershed. The Fourmile Run Restoration Project is a multi-site, multi-year project that began in July. Led by project manager, Josh Penatzer, the project involves partners from the PA Fish & Boat Commission, Western PA Conservancy and Westmoreland Conservation District.

The recently completed first project phase consisted of three individual sites along the stream. An 800 foot section just off of Hoover Road in Cook Township was tackled first, where a total of 20 devices including log vane deflectors, modified mudsills and rootwad deflectors were installed. The second site was a 650 foot section upstream from the Darlington Fire Department, where 15 similar devices were installed.

The final improved site this year was a 1,600 stretch at the mouth of Fourmile near the confluence of the Loyalhanna Creek. Thirty-four devices were installed in this large section, including cross vanes and stone deflectors to help increase the flow of the stream through this section.

All of the devices that were constructed will benefit nearby landowners by preventing further erosion and restoring areas degraded by years of severe erosion causing events. The aquatic life of Fourmile Run will also be positively impacted by increasing habitat for fish and other species, reducing sediment loading, and adding swifter water for more dissolved oxygen.

Phase two of the Project will be underway in summer, 2017 and will address erosion areas and sediment issues along the Red Rock area of the stream.



A modified mudsill will help stabilize a once-eroding bank while creating habitat for fish.



The 2016 YCC Crew spent another successful summer working on various projects throughout Forbes State Forest under the direction of veteran crew leader, Bill Repko. All participants received a \$2,500 scholarship to further their education, thanks to the generosity of the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation. Participating students were front (L-R): Jenna Farruggia, Allegheny College, Kaitlyn Cunningham, St. Vincent College, Ashley Rowder, Saint Francis University, Bill Repko, and back (L-R) Brett Ramer, Indiana University of PA, Luke Benzinger, Penn State Dubois, Angelin Tucunduva, Federal University of Lavras, Brazil.

Recycling News



We've had many phone calls about recycling lately and are pleased to pass along the following information on local recycling options.

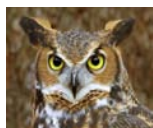
Westmoreland Cleanways operates a very successful program for hard to recycle items and electronics at their staffed recycling center just off of Route 30 East in Latrobe. Hours are Mondays, noon - 5 pm, and Wednesdays and Fridays, 8 am - 1 pm. The center is also open the 2nd Saturday of each month from 8:30 am - noon. Contact them at (724) 879-4020 for more information.

Ligonier Township is seeing positive results with the drop-off containers at the municipal office in Ligonier. Currently, paper, cardboard and aluminum cans are being collected. Contact them at (724) 238-2725 for more information.

Upcoming Events



OCTOBER



All About Owls!

Wednesday, October 19
6:30 - 8:00 pm

Join PA Game Commission Wildlife Diversity Biologist, Tammy Colt, for a fun program learning about one of Pennsylvania's most popular species, OWLS! Tammy will give a brief presentation on the Commission's private landowner assistance program to help attract and maintain this incredible species, and all participants will have the opportunity to discover more about owls in a hands-on "owl pellet" activity appropriate for all ages.

- Program will be held in the Nimick Family Education Center at the Watershed Farm
- Free, donations welcome
- Registration required by calling (724) 238-7560, ext 1#



Halloween at the Farm

Sunday, October 30
2:00 - 4:00 pm

LWA's first annual family Halloween event is going to be spooktacular! Join LWA staff and volunteers for an afternoon filled with hayrides, creature crafts and ghost stories! Wear your costumes and enjoy a fun experience geared for all ages.

- Program will be held in the Nimick Family Education Center and grounds of the Watershed Farm
- Free, donations welcome
- Registration required by calling (724) 238-7560, ext 1#



NOVEMBER

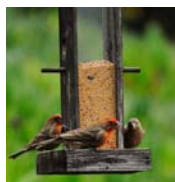


D.I.Y Community Workshop

Wednesday, Nov. 2
6:30 - 8:00 pm

LWA is pleased to partner with the Westmoreland Land Trust on hosting this community workshop to gain local input as part of Westmoreland County's New Comprehensive Plan, "Reimagining Our Westmoreland." Materials and refreshments will be provided, just bring some great ideas!

- Workshop will be held in the Nimick Family Education Center at the Watershed Farm
- Registration required as space is limited to 20 people. Contact LWA at (724) 238-7560, ext 1#



Fall Birdseed Sale

Monday - Thursday
November 7-10
9:00 am - 1:00 pm daily

LWA is now taking orders for our semi-annual birdseed fundraiser! Now is a great time to stock up on your favorite seed mixes to keep your feathered friends happy through the winter. New options for picking up your seed are available this year! Contact the LWA office for more details or to place your order today.

- Order form is enclosed with this newsletter. Orders must be placed by October 27th - return form or call (724) 238-7560, ext 3#



DECEMBER



Holiday Open House & Miniature Display

Sunday, December 4
1:00 - 5:00 pm

As part of the festivities at the Townwide open house in Ligonier, stop in to see the miniature village and train display set up in the barn and experience a tour led by miniature expert, Wink Knowles. Attendees can also make their own birdfeeders to attract our area's winter birds and enjoy some refreshments as well!

- Display will be set up in the Nimick Education Center at the Watershed Farm
- Free, donations welcome



Save the Dates! 2017

- Dec. 23 - Jan. 2: Office closed for holidays
- February: Winter Birdseed Sale
- April 22: Earth Day Roadside Cleanups - Ligonier & Latrobe
- May 20: 4th Annual Loyalhanna Sojourn
- September 8: 33rd Annual Art Auction Benefit

Wetland Projects Enhance Protected Properties



Newly constructed wetland after a heavy rain.
Drone photo courtesy of Patrick Repko.

Two projects were recently completed on properties held by LWA for conservation purposes, and although different in design and location, each will provide enhancements to both habitat and education.

The former Shirey Motel property along Route 30 west was recently restored from a commercial property to a beneficial emergent wetland habitat. LWA acquired the nine-acre property at the bankruptcy sale of Greg Podlucky's former estate in 2009. In 2011, LWA worked with the PA Game Commission to conduct a wildlife habitat management plan for the property to see what the best use should be, as it is part of the nearly 25 acres of stream buffer and floodplain habit protected by our organization between the Route 30 East/West corridor.

The project was designed by Chris Clouser of BluAcres, LLC, who specializes in wetland design and construction. The site contains very shallow water areas in some locations that are visible only after heavy rainfall or snowmelt. The

feature of the project is not necessarily to create standing water, but to provide a habitat with native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees that will encourage wildlife, specifically birds, to nest and live there. Species known to be in this area from previous breeding bird atlas surveys include Acadian flycatcher, Louisiana waterthrush, sedge wren, willow flycatcher, cerulean warbler, wood duck and belted kingfisher. As with all LWA properties, the public will be able to enjoy the property through passive recreation including walking and birdwatching. The project was supported by mitigation funds provided by PennDOT District 9-0 and District 12-0 and the Westmoreland County Airport Authority.

Just down Old Route 30, Danny Verna, along with his family and fellow scouts from Troop 375, constructed an observation platform to be used during educational programs and wildlife watching at the Watershed Farm's wetland. Accessible from the driveway, users can walk back a short pathway to reach the platform and keep their feet dry while looking at the diversity of plants, insects, birds, amphibians and other wetland inhabitants. This is tremendous asset to help connect students with the importance of a wetland ecosystem. Thank you Danny for all of your hard work!



Danny Verna (center) works with fellow scouts from troop 375 on the observation platform.

Spring & Summer Highlights!



Hellbender found in the Loyalhanna!



New wetland education program supported by the Ligonier Valley Education Trust



Congratulations Josh and Ellie Penatzer!



Annual Loyalhanna Sojourn



Low Country Boil and Annual Art Auction Events



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