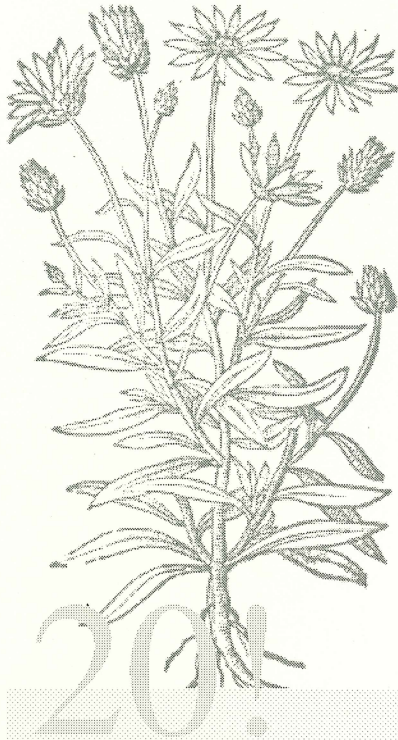




Summer 2002

Pascommuck post



Roots?

We are planning to celebrate the 20th birthday of Pascommuck Conservation Trust later this year and need your help in collecting memories, comments, maps, membership lists, project descriptions or anything else that might help to honor past members and tell our story to the Community.

**Please contact
Dawn Ackley at 527-2269
or Joe Kielic at 527-6536.**

Proposed Community Garden Project

The Trust has proposed a community garden on one of its parcels. The parcel is now known as the West Farm in the White Brook Plains Area off Strong Street/ Plain Street. This site is under the APR (Agricultural Preservation Act) and consists of approximately sixteen acres. This acreage must be kept in agricultural use in order to maintain our commitment to the APR requirements. There are also a few issues with this parcel which make it difficult for normal agricultural use:

1. The top soil has been removed and the remaining soil is sandy.
2. There is a sand pit on it which is currently being used illegally by ATV riders.
3. There is no water supply.
4. The configuration of the parcel is awkward and much of it is hilly.

Although the Trust has approached various farmers, none were interested because of the issues cited above. The Trust has decided after much brainstorming, that the only feasible solution would be a community garden. In this way, the soil could be organically amended by individual gardeners tending their own plots.

The Trust contacted Conway School of Landscape Design to draw up a preliminary plan to propose to the public. The team did a very intense study of the land, and researched its' past and present history. The next step was to conduct a meeting to seek input and gather feedback.

The meeting was well organized and well represented by both the Conway School and by the Trust organizers. While there was a mixed reaction, it is hoped that during subsequent, smaller group meetings, which will be held over the summer, most of the objections will be addressed and hopefully this project will go through in a positive manner.

Basing our research on other community gardens, there will be stringent guidelines which each gardener must adhere to in order to remain a member.

The Trust has accomplished many great projects for the people of Easthampton. Should this project come to fruition, the Trust feels it will be a great asset to the neighborhood as well as the community at large.

Peter Ogulewicz

The Evolution of a Popular Fundraiser

One of the Trusts' most popular fundraisers over the years has been our annual dual sales events—the Earth Day Plant/Bake Sale at the Big E's parking lot, and the Fall Festival Plant Sale/Display table under the big tent at the high school grounds. Exactly how and when these events evolved is a bit fuzzy, but I'll try to piece it all together, as we analyze the makings of a successful sales and public relations phenomenon.

Most likely the seed germinated around 1990, when to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Earth Day, Mike Tautznik obtained a number of tree seedlings for us through the Hampshire Conservation District. Consequently, Mike Superson, manager of Big E's Supermarket, graciously allowed us to set up our wares at the parking lot, and with a few plants/baked goods we proceeded to rake in one or two hundred smackers. Well now, every spring we'd add more plants and goodies, and each year more people came to realize the quality and reasonable prices of our merchandise – a deadly combo for attracting customers!

Meanwhile, we were also carrying on with a fall Plant Sale/Trust Display of sorts under our tent at John Bator Park. I remember, along with plant sales, arts and crafts from local artisans, plus tag sales (mostly “antiques” from Stella Wiernasz's overflowing collection stored at her various apartment buildings). Why, we even sold hot dogs and soda from the Pepsi wagon donated by Big E's - first near the pond, then later at the Fall Festival itself. Of course, all this hoopla at or near our park had a sinister purpose - to capitalize on the flow of traffic to and from the Fall Festival, including those popular pontoon boat tours of the Nashawannuck Pond. Along with our Park activities, the Trust would often run a display booth inside the high school, usually showing slides of our properties and exhibiting photos and other propaganda connected to our work. At some point though, we needed to make life easier for ourselves, and decided to join the real crowd under the big tent near the high school. This afforded us more leeway to expand our operations, so to speak, and certainly increased our exposure.

Thus, from humble beginnings selling a few plants and sweets, our spring and fall sales events have developed into a successful, popular enterprise - from a few bucks and modest recognition to this spring's revenue of over



\$1200.00 and a much expanded public awareness of the important work that we do. Now it's not uncommon for people to approach us and exclaim how the plants they had purchased from us in the past are doing well or have grown into mature specimens: now it's not as hard to entice more and more individuals to become members (finally!).

But wait a minute! Don't forget the rest of the story here. All the behind-the-scene stuff can't be ignored: all the preparation and hard work by so many volunteers must be acknowledged, you're darn tootin! There's booking a location in advance, advertising, notifying volunteers, arranging for transportation of all items, creating displays: and you know, plants don't just pop out of the blue and get potted and labeled by elves: and we have to rely on many sources for plant material - members' gardens, donations from nurseries or garden clubs or businesses, Hampshire Conservation District, leftovers from past plant sales, and divisions, seedlings or discards collected by yours truly, John the Bushman. Ah, then we must pray for decent weather and enough help to handle the complete operation. Quite a task, rest assured!

So there you have it - the story of how our double-barreled sales event has progressed in time, and what it takes to make this work. Yup, it takes many dedicated volunteers, a supportive public, and enough time to build up a following. Certainly I want to thank everyone who has contributed to our sales and displays in the past, and look forward to seeing you at the Fall Festival this September. “So come on down” ...to my Johnnie's discount plant sale and Trust display!

John Bator

Trash Cleanup:

Manhan River Conservation Area

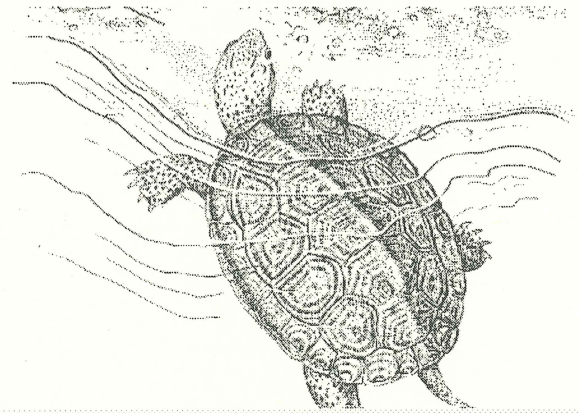
It was just a few years ago that the Trust had invested "big bucks" and an entire weekend or two cleaning up major trash deposits along the Terrace View section of our Manhan River Conservation Area off Pleasant Street. Truckloads of debris were collected, and an eight foot fence was erected on our border. Now, we are at it again! Last year the Trust and certain neighboring abutters were cited by the Board of Health, a second time. Some of these neighbors went ahead and cleaned their properties on their own, and the Trust organized a work party to tackle not only our line, but that of fellow abutters, Norm Savoie and Jerry Burt. So, on Saturday morning, May 11th, a few Trust members and volunteers spent part of the day in intense labor, again removing an assortment of trash, from diapers to appliances, to "you name it"! Some abutters, Norm Savoie, and others, not only helped with the pick-up, but also offered the use of their dump-stickered trucks for removal – an extremely helpful gesture which saved us loads of money and headaches. At the completion of our nasty task, our tired and hungry bodies were rewarded by an infusion of pizza, grinders and soda donated by local restaurants.

That accomplished, we still have to contend with other problems. An addition to our present fence will be needed to further discourage dumping on or near our property; this time to extend into the Savoie and Burt Ford parcels. Negotiations for permission are in the works with these neighbors, plus the City, which owns the right-of-way along the street and proposed fence line. We will also need to cut some brush, weeds and small trees in front of the fence line, and must secure funding to pay for the labor and materials needed on this project. A Grant from the Community Foundation was applied for and awarded, but we may still need more funding to protect this valuable conservation area.

The Board of Directors extends their deepest thanks to all who pitched in and dug in on this difficult task. Hopefully this will be our final encounter with trash at Terrace View, and we can once again get back to more noble Trust affairs....

Stella Wiernasz.

The Board of Directors wishes to congratulate Stella Wiernasz for her diligence in acquiring this grant funding and also for her tireless work in organizing the work party at Terrace View, and also in obtaining food donations from various local eateries that day. "Thank you, Stella"



News from Ol' Turtle Farm

As the fourth season begins at Ol' Turtle Farm, thoughts of appreciation go out to all who helped save this land. The farm is moving along as planned. The year 2001 ended with numerous repairs to the house and barns. The Far Barn now has three sides and a roof. The west side will be redone this fall, bringing to an end most of the major repairs to the infrastructure on the farm. During the winter of 2002, the new distribution room was enclosed and a cold room was built. This spring a gravel road was put in to provide better access and more parking for the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project. The Far Barn will be used for distribution this season.

Community Supported Agriculture encompasses building a community that directly supports a farm. The farmer and the community equally participate in the risks and the abundance often dictated by Mother Nature. This arrangement provides the financial stability, which is so necessary to the survival of local, small scale, personalized agriculture, while offering farm members the unique opportunity to know how their food is grown and to know the people growing it.

CSA membership is on tract. This season we will have 135 shares, providing food for approximately 200 households. As in years past, we anticipate having a waiting list when distribution starts the first or second week of June. The newest additions to the farm are three lambs. As we work toward becoming more sustainable, the lambs and chickens provide needed fertility, as well as help manage our cover crops, and provide some insect control. Our cover crop program this year is based on sectional cropping—a section of vegetable crops between two sections of cover crops. We are hoping this will provide more beneficial insect habitat as well as facilitate our crop rotations.

Many members of the CSA and the local community have given time and energy to help us in our journey to create a sustainable farm. Volunteers are an essential part of our work force and we thank all who have helped. Anyone interested in lending a helping hand, contact the farm at 413-527-9122. The farm is open to visits from all interested parties.

Eileen Droscher

Brickyard Brook Conservation Area News

A memorial rock originating from the slopes of Mt. Tom, has been placed in the Brickyard Brook Conservation Area. A donation of \$500.00 or more toward protection of farmland in this area entitled donors to have names of their loved ones engraved on a bronze plaque. Thus seventeen acres of farmland, which is now Ol' Turtle Farm, were saved from development. A collaboration of the Trustees of Reservations, the Pascommuck Conservation Trust, and the neighbors raised over \$82,000.00 to put the land under an APR (Agricultural Preservation Restriction).

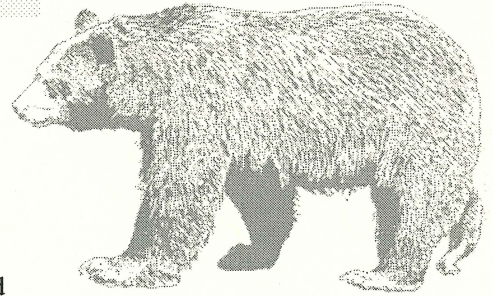
On July 18, 2002 at 6:30 pm the memorial rock will be officially dedicated, loved ones will be remembered, and our 1998 accomplishment will be celebrated. Charlie Wyman, a land protection specialist with the Trustees of Reservations, will say a few words. Also speaking will be Mayor Mike Tautznik and Eileen Droescher of Ol' Turtle Farm. Light refreshments will be available following the dedication. All Pascommuck Trust members are cordially invited to attend. Please meet at 395 East Street at 6:15. Call Bill Burgart for additional information 413-527-9080.

Signs recognizing the work of the Trustees of Reservations, the Pascommuck Trust and community supporters will be placed at both ends of the trail.

Bill Burgart and Sue Walz

Special Thanks to:

*Bernie Gawle for donating and transporting the rock on the Trust Property.
Special Thanks to Morgan Mitchell for advising and helping with the plaque.
The plaque was purchased from Mitchell Monuments.*



In other Brickyard Brook news, a mother bear and her three cubs have been spotted in the conservation area and in neighboring backyards. Temporary signs have been placed to alert trail walkers about the bears.



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