



Penns Valley Conservation Association

www.pennsvalley.net

Spring 2011

GASLAND Draws a Crowd

--by Mary Carol Frier--

On March 11, 2011, the movie Gasland was shown in the Penns Valley High School Auditorium. About 125 people attended and most stayed to hear the post-movie panel talk about the local effects of drilling in Centre County. Michele Barbin and Gary Thornbloom, both of the Moshannon Chapter of the Sierra Club, and David Yoxheimer, of Penn State's Marcellus Center, comprised the panel. Nathan Sooy, Director of Clean Water Action of Harrisburg, PA, moderated the lively Q&A following the movie.

As of January 13, 2011, the Centre County Planning Department reported that 16 deep, hydrofracked horizontal well pads had been constructed in the county. An additional 17 well pads had been permitted at that time. It is unknown how many of the wells drilled on these pads have been fracked. Currently, the number of wells is approaching one hundred. All of these well pads have been permitted and/or constructed in the northwestern townships of the county. Five water withdrawal points are in use, primarily along the Moshannon and Beech creeks.

Although the Penns Valley area does not have Marcellus shale under it, our communities are underlain by the Utica shale. Range Resources has drilled in the Utica shale layer in Southwestern PA and it is unknown how soon Utica shale exploration and drilling could occur in Penns Valley. Based on the experiences of Burnside and Snow Shoe townships, deep horizontal drilling tends to make industrial zones out of once quiet, pristine woods and streams. Noise, dust,

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Grain kicks off the RiverSongs Festival at the Elk Creek Café.

Benefit Raffle Culminates at RiverSongs

--by Judith Fordham--

The culmination of many weeks of serious raffle ticket selling by some of our members and supporting businesses ended on Sunday, April 17th at the RiverSongs Festival at the Elk Creek Café. The businesses that helped out with selling tickets were Tussey Mountain Outfitters and Black Walnut Body Works, in Bellefonte, Freeze Thaw Cycles and Nature's Pantry in State College, Inglebean Coffeehouse, Millheim Small Engine and the Elk Creek Café in Millheim, and The Natural Food Store and Cherry Alley Café in Lewisburg. PVCA is very thankful for all the wonderful support we received.

I think the folks who work at the Elk Creek Café should be given a loud Huzza; they sold the most tickets of any business. The top ticket seller among our members goes to Sue Haney who employed some very creative techniques to ticket sales; another well deserved Huzzah for Sue. Thanks to all the members that helped--we sold every ticket!

RiverSongs was the wonderful name given to the celebration of our beautiful watershed,

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President's Column

--by Jim Zubler--

On the heels of another fulfilling Annual Clean-Up of our Valley Creeks, that we specifically target for their continued availability for public fishing, and the near culmination of a successful and eventful spring season for PVCA, a well-deserved thank you is extended to our Community Outreach Committee and the dedicated volunteers who invest their time and spirit to these many public outreach activities and events.

To illustrate the breadth and depth of activities in which PVCA has been involved, in March we hosted the Valley showing of Josh Fox's Gasland, attracting a crowd of citizens eager to learn more about drilling, especially with its close proximity in the northern reaches of Centre County. From this showing and the information shared by panelists afterward, we are endeavoring to understand all that we can about this industrial activity and its resultant effects on natural and human communities.

Considering those cause and effect relationships, the PVCA Board of Directors sequestered themselves on a Saturday in early April, engaging the facilitation services of the Institute for Conservation Leadership (ICL). ICL, as an outside resource, began work with the Board to look at streamlining communication within the organization with an eye toward strengthening the overall effectiveness of PVCA.

As an outgrowth of this facilitation, the Board set an ambitious goal to create an updated five year Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2017 with a companion Annual Plan for 2012 and subsequent years afterward. The Board also set a goal to collectively define expectations and responsibilities for Board members, with guidelines to engage high-functioning committees assigned with the task of carrying out the organization's work.

Mid-month saw us at the Riversongs Festival at the Elk

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PVCA's Mission

PVCA serves as a steward of the Upper Penns Creek watershed and all its communities. We work to protect and conserve Penns Valley's waters, farmland, forests, and the heritage upon which its vibrant rural quality of life depends. We do this by organizing and supporting activities that promote healthy natural systems and foster local economies.

- *PVCA works towards the conservation of Penns Valley's natural resources, historical features and heritage, and economic well-being.*
- *PVCA continues to monitor water quality and to promote public awareness of watershed issues.*
- *PVCA organizes streambank and roadside litter cleanups.*
- *PVCA works with farmers to promote economically and ecologically sound agricultural practices*



Volunteers with their haul at the Stream Bank Cleanup

Presidents Message, continued from p. 2

Creek Café, celebrating along with 100+ supporters and three bands donating their talents to the festivities. The event marked the opening of trout and fishing season in the Valley and the conclusion of, by all accounts, a successful fund-raiser for PVCA. Bolstered by the great prizes donated by enthusiastic PVCA supporters, members and volunteers sold raffle tickets throughout Central Pennsylvania while at the same time educating citizens about the mission, vision and work of the organization. Personally, I used this fundraiser as a way to introduce PVCA to persons I would not have typically taken the opportunity to previously. From this experience, I learned that nearly 100% of the persons I approached were more than happy to support the work of our organization and secondarily have an opportunity to win fabulous prizes.

Let us carry this enthusiasm and encouragement forward to our other work, including the Compost Workshop as a part of our continuing Sustainable Living Series and our continuing Environmental Days organized and staffed by our Environmental Educator, Kathleen Galligan, along with the help of many volunteers to wrap-up this most busy of spring seasons.

Thank you for being a good steward of the Valley.

--Jim

crumbling roads and an immense volume of truck traffic all serve to make communities unlivable. Communities with an agricultural base generally see the base shrink because land and air can become tainted with chemicals used to produce the gas. In northern counties, farm landowners who have leased their lands generally drop out of production farming.

Across Pennsylvania, some water wells have been contaminated due to drilling activity. Once this happens, property values usually plummet, as has happened in Bradford and Susquehanna counties. The stage has then been set for community dissolution, since essential services cannot be supplied if there is no marketable property to tax.

PVCA presented the Gasland movie as a service to our membership and our communities. The gas drilling activity is a large, well-funded industrial activity that is “environmentally challenged”. Those who are interested can find more information about the myths and realities of shale gas drilling in the youtube video found here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpMa18_ja_wk, which features Dr. Anthony Ingraffea of Cornell University, who recently spoke at Penn State. Dr. Ingraffea specializes in hydraulic fracture simulation and pipeline safety. His voice and expertise has been a significant factor influencing the moratorium New York State has placed on shale gas drilling.

SLOW MONEY UPDATE

The Slow Money Committee continues to seek ways to support both the growing business scene in Millheim, and small businesses and producers in the Valleys. We were honored to be invited to share some of our ideas when Leadership Centre County came to Elk Creek Café in April, and are starting discussions about ways we might expand the business directory. Let us know how you think we can help strengthen our local economy! We would love to hear your ideas, either in person at our third Tuesday of the month potluck suppers, or by e-mailing Lisa: lisa@smartworkco.com.

Spring Brings Environmental Days to Area Schools

--by Kathleen Galligan--

Across Penns Valley the seasons are finally turning in a rumble of thunder and an explosion of flowers. In our schools, students are pouring out of classrooms to explore their schoolyards and local natural resources as this year's Spring Environmental Days get underway.

During this annual PVCA event, students in kindergarten through eighth grade learn about a variety of topics, including seed dispersal, soil sciences, plant and animal adaptations, and how to prevent water pollution. Students put the science they learned inside the classroom to work outdoors, creating models, looking under fallen logs, and watching water rockets soar into the sky. This year, students will be visiting local farms, the Muddy Paws Marsh wetland, and the Penns Valley Environmental Center, in addition to explorations on school grounds, learning about what they see every day.

This year, our education efforts will also reach a special needs class, providing these students with activities designed specifically for their unique abilities and needs. We are also working on expanding our Environmental Days into the high school classes, allowing students to experience these days through all of their formative school years.

In addition to our annual events, our education program is making strides in new directions. This year, two different summer camps will be offered through the Penns Valley School District. The first camp, "Culinary School for Future Chefs" will focus on how to find and cook with local foods. It will make students aware of the cornucopia of locally grown foods Penns Valley has to offer, teach them about nutrition and food preparation, and also help them create some delicious dishes to take home!

The second camp, called "Survivor: Penns Valley," will teach students survival skills and how to prepare themselves for spending extended time in nature. It will pass on



important information like how to use a map and compass, where to find water, what plants are edible, and various ways of building a fire. This camp will culminate in a "Survivor" style competition that lets students practice their new knowledge while spending time in the Penns Valley Environmental Center.

As always, our environmental education program would simply not be the shining example it is to students today without the help of our amazing volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering and joining the effort to connect kids with the environment, or want more information about our upcoming summer camps, please contact Kathleen Galligan by phone at (484) 390 – 0675 or by e-mail at kgalligan@pennsvalley.org.

If you are interested in connecting more with nature but aren't a student in the Penns Valley School District, don't despair! There are endless ways to spend more time in the outdoors. For example, you could set a goal this spring to learn one new birdsong every week. If you aren't already a gardener, you could try planting a few herbs or vegetables for the first time. You could explore the Penns Valley Environmental Center, Muddy Paws Marsh, or attend one of PVCA's upcoming events or workshops. You could watch one tree every day to see how its leaves grow and change with the season. And why stop there? You could even lay out on the grass and look for shapes in the clouds—why should kids get to have all the fun?

A "Chance" to Support Conservation in Penns Valley

--by George Kelly--

Always dreamed of owning a bamboo fly rod but the \$1,000 plus price tag was just a little steep? Well you now have the opportunity to fulfill that dream and, as an added bonus, use a handcrafted wading staff when you take to your favorite stream.

Thanks to the generosity of two of our talented supporters, the Penns Valley Conservation Association has just kicked off a "rod and staff" raffle that will give some lucky participant the opportunity to win a pair of beautiful and useful locally produced items and all of the proceeds will benefit conservation in Penns Valley.

Jim Downes has donated a 7'3", 2 piece, 2 tip bamboo fly rod for 4 wt line. Jim is a full time rod maker who builds his rods in a shop in Coburn, PA on the banks of Penns Creek. For more information on Jim and the rods he produces, visit his website at www.ljdownesrodcompany.com.

In addition, Tom Doman, local fishing guide and conservationist, has donated a handcrafted wading staff to accompany the bamboo fly rod. The wading staff is made from white ash and crafted and finished by hand. For more information, check out Tom's website at www.pennscreekguides.com.

Only 100 tickets will be sold and the lucky winner will own both the rod and staff. Tickets are \$30.00 each or 2 for \$50.00 and are available at the Elk Creek Café + Aleworks. A public drawing will be held at the Café at 3:00 pm on Sunday, June 19, 2011. Both items are on display at the Café, so stop in, take a look, and buy your tickets before they're gone.

This is your "chance" to support conservation in Penns Valley. One participant will win a pair of beautiful handcrafted fishing tools, and all of you who buy tickets will be winners for joining us in conserving the natural resources of our valley.



Yes! I would like to join PVCA and help to preserve and protect our beautiful valley! Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership dues

- \$25 Single/Family
 \$50 Supporter
 \$100 Benefactor
 \$150 Patron
 \$250 Steward
 \$500 Conservationist
 \$10 Senior or Student
Gift Membership \$ _____

We like to thank our members and donors in our newsletter.

- Name(s) to list in newsletter: _____
 I/We prefer to remain anonymous

(Please provide your name and gift recipient's name below)

Name _____

Company/Farm _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please make checks payable to "PVCA"

Thank You for Your Support!

Penns Valley Conservation Association

PO Box 165, Aaronsburg, PA 16820 www.pennsvalley.net

Hey, I want to do more! My area of interest is: (check all that apply)

- Computer/website
 Membership
 Wetland Restoration
 Publicity
 Watershed Protection
 Crickfest
 Community Outreach/Education
 Local Foods
 Fundraising

PVCA may share its mailing list with like-minded organizations. Please check here if you do not want your name shared.



Raffle and RiverSongs, continued from p. 1

food, art, trout fishing and fermented beverages. It was a great event, with over 90 people filling the Elk Creek Café. We were all treated to a variety of music provided by the bands Grain, Poe Valley Troubadours, and Eric Athey and the New Lost Coburn Ramblers.

After the second band finished playing the moment arrived that we'd all been waiting for--three marvelous items were ready to be raffled off: a Trek, Gary Fisher "Cobia" mountain bicycle, donated by Freeze Thaw Cycles, a beautiful blue 'Glide' Kayak donated by Tussey Mountain Outfitters, and a handsome wooden bench made and donated by Josh McCracken.

After the tickets were shuffled, turned and stirred by a multitude of people, the winning tickets were drawn by Huck Tritsch. The master of ceremonies, Gary Gyekis read off the first ticket... and the winner was Bill Wolfe. He chose the bike as his prize. The drums were rolled and the second ticket was chosen... WHAT!!! Bill Wolfe drawn AGAIN!! (I wonder what the odds were of that happening?) Amidst the general roar of disappointment from the crowd, Bill was disqualified. The next ticket belonged to Walt Witmer. He chose the Kayak. Jim Fordham won the final prize--Josh's Bench, especially made for the event.

This proved to be a very successful Fund Raiser for PVCA's Environmental Education Program. Many thanks again to all who participated!

➔ **CRICKFEST 2011!** ➔

It's time to start training, if you haven't already, for the 1st Annual **CRICKFEST** Wader Olympics! It all happens this year on the day before Labor Day, **Sunday, September 4**, in the **Coburn Park at the forks of Pine, Elk and Penns Creeks**. Teams and individual athletes from around the globe will compete in a spirit of silliness in events including the three-legged-wader race, standing and running wader broad jump, wader ballet, etc., etc... And of course there will be the usual, stupendous conflation of games, entertainment and educational activities to please children of all ages in the Valley! Including: *this bulletin just in as we go to press*, the long-awaited, much anticipated return of the **MacGillicuddies** to the **CRICKFEST** main stage music line up! Expect more yummy local food at the apex of the harvest season! Support and celebrate the accomplishments of the **Penns Valley Conservation Association** and its partners in stewardship of the upper Penns Creek watershed.

Planning and organizing, setting up tents, chairs and tables, staffing informative booths, food service, donating and presenting silent auction and raffle items, kids activities, and cleaning up during and after **CRICKFEST** requires the participation of legions of happy volunteers at **CRICKFEST** and in the months leading up to big event. Please help out again if you have before, or get involved with a fun and meaningful event that supports environmental education in the Penns Valley School District.

*To volunteer or find out more about
CRICKFEST planning contact:
info@pennsvalley.net*



What's New at the Penn's Valley Learning Garden?

NEWSFLASH!! JUST IN!! - We are waiting on the official letter, but the 4/22/2011 CDT posted a PADEP news release which includes the following:

"(The PA) Department of Environmental Protection today announced that it has awarded more than \$538,000 in Environmental Education Grants to 102 non-profits, schools, universities and conservation districts across Pennsylvania.

Grant recipients will use the funding to develop projects such as hosting sustainability workshops, holding nature programs for children, and implementing environmental education programs in their communities.

Centre County - Penns Valley Conservation Association - \$2,868. *The Penns Valley Conservation Association will coordinate an outdoor water conservation demonstration project by installing rain water collection tanks, drip irrigation hoses and educational signage in the Penns Valley Community Learning Garden."*

Volunteers with the Learning Garden wish to thank the PVCA Board for their support thus far. The community is invited to participate!!

The Penn's Valley Learning Garden enters its third year of education and participatory demonstration to the valley and its visitors!! So what's new for 2011?

A new initiative taken on by the PVLG and co-founder, Brian Burger, of New Harmony Farmstead is a Penn's Valley seed bank of sorts - **Project "Gartensamen"** (or Garden Seed). The name reflects the overwhelming Pennsylvania Dutch heritage of Penn's Valley.

Brian will provide a short-list of essential, open-pollinated garden seeds. These are for annual garden plants we should all use for calories and nutrients. They must be tended willingly and diligently at the participant's own home garden and kept from hybridizing to stay pure. These are not for vegetable harvest as a priority but for seed saving. These critically

important home-garden participants will save and dry seeds returning to a fall seed-savers exchange at the garden. Mentorship on the growing and seed-saving project will be offered through Learning Garden volunteers.

Even in the world of organic agriculture, we are being corporately assaulted with genetic engineering!! Save your health, save your food, save your home - **SAVE GOOD SEEDS!!**

This is an exercise aimed at community resilience. Come to the PVLG at the start of the farmer's market season on May 14th to participate. We can sure use some program mentors, too! Variety in the program will depend on mentor participation. Share your knowledge and passion for gardening, good food and community. Exciting stuff!! Contact: [NewHarmonyFarmstead\[at\]hotmail\[dot\]com](mailto:NewHarmonyFarmstead[at]hotmail[dot]com)

Annual Stream-Side Litter Round-up

--by Annie Mascelli--

About 35 people, PVCA members and some new faces among them, gathered at Coburn Park on Saturday, April 23 to cleanup along our swollen creeks. Teams went out to Elk Creek in Millheim (where a Boy Scout Troop was also working), Sinking Creek in Spring Mills, and along several stretches of Penns Creek.

The rain let up and work progressed easily, with those driving pick-up trucks swinging by to haul the trash-filled bags back to the big dumpster rented for the occasion. Some exciting finds included a ceramic frog, a mismatched pair of flip flops, and a car grill that looked like the spine of some futuristic droidasaurus. A delicious potluck followed the hard work, with plenty of leftover cookies to take home.

Thanks to everyone who pitched in to help keep our waterways litter free. Happily, the creek banks and roadsides weren't too bad and should now be in great shape for warm weather enjoyment by plants, animals, and people alike.



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Penns Valley Learning Garden Workshop Schedule

The Penns Valley Learning Garden is located at the American Legion in Millheim and is a participant in the Millheim Farmers' Market.

May 21st: Crop Rotation

June 25th: Solar Oven Demonstration

July 16th: Flea Beetle Deterrence Strategies

August 6th: Testing of Pressure Gauges

August 20th: In-ground Cold Frame and Backyard Barrel Root Cellar

September (last market): Seed Oil Extraction Demonstration

Win a Bamboo Fly-Rod and Hand-crafted Wading Staff!

*Tickets are on sale at the Elk Creek Café in Millheim.
Proceeds support conservation in Penns Valley!
(more details on p. 5)*

