

THE HORIZON

NORTH BRANCH LAND TRUST NEWS | SUMMER 2025





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Executive Director's Letter

ELLEN FERRETTI

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of The Horizon!

These past few months have been full with conservation projects, educational events and getting to meet more and more people interested in North Branch Land Trust. Your land trust hosted five Open Houses in Bradford, Susquehanna, Wyoming and Luzerne counties. A sincere thanks to our hosts at those events and to all the people who attended to discover what North Branch Land Trust is and what it does.

We received good media coverage as well, which means a larger audience heard about the mission and services of North Branch Land Trust. We met a few landowners who are in the early process of thinking about conserving their land, and we will be there for them when they reach out to talk again. Maybe my favorite comment came from an attendee in Bradford

County. Once he learned about the Land Trust and the ways we work with landowners to conserve and steward land, he stopped and said that this was great, but why aren't we doing more? To that we replied, we want to, that's what we're here for!

It cannot be overstated; we are here because the community of Northeastern Pennsylvania supports us! It is because of you that your Land Trust can continue to conserve and steward our precious lands and waters and provide more environmental educational events for all to enjoy.

Please consider donating to North Branch Land Trust to keep the conservation mission going! To all who donate now, thank you! If you are reading this and our Mission resonates with you but have not contributed to North Branch Land Trust, please consider donating and becoming part of this conservation mission.

We hope you have a wonderful summer and please don't forget to notice the beauty of our mountains, forests, fields, streams, rivers and valleys. Enjoy!



A message from the Board Chair

STEPHEN MAAKESTAD

Welcome to Summer! While it may not always feel like it—thanks to the record-breaking rainfall—we're excited for the season ahead! Before the rain arrived in full force, we were fortunate to gather for our annual dinner and auction at The Westmoreland Club, where we honored the Tambur Family Foundation. It was a fantastic evening with a wonderful turnout, and we'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners and sponsors who helped make the event such a success.

North Branch Land Trust has a full and exciting summer planned, with several upcoming events we hope you'll join us for:

Monitoring Moths – July 19

Yoga in the Forest – August 10

And don't forget to save the date for our beloved Barn Banquet at Friedman Family Farms on **September 16!**

Sending my warmest wishes to all our friends and supporters—and here's to more sunny days ahead!



"Conserving precious land...forever."

OUR MISSION: North Branch Land Trust partners with landowners, communities, and stakeholders to conserve and care for Northeastern Pennsylvania's lands and waters.

OUR VISION: A future where abundant conserved lands help maintain clean air and water, diverse forests and wildlife habitats, vibrant working farms, and inspiring natural beauty.

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NBLT IN THE NEWS

Huntsville Reservoir Easement



“A CRITICAL UNDERTAKING” CONSERVING 220 ACRES OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

North Branch Land Trust, in collaboration with Pennsylvania American Water, is proud to announce the successful completion of a major conservation easement on the Huntsville Reservoir in Dallas Borough and Lehman Township, Luzerne County. The project, (which has been in development since 2022), will provide a buffer, protect the habitat, and preserve the natural beauty of the area. It will also provide limited improvements of nature trails for public access for walking and hiking.

The easement aligns with North Branch Land Trust’s mission of partnering with landowners, communities and stakeholders to conserve and care for Northeastern Pennsylvania’s lands and waters. A public access area off Reservoir Road will provide limited access to the northwest section, for walks on nature trails and environmental education. The site design employs green stormwater management practices and landscaping to enhance aesthetics of native flora and the riparian forest.

Funding for this project was received through a grant from the Community Conservation Partnership Program, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Keystone Recreation Park and Conservation Fund (Key ’93); a very generous donation from Pennsylvania American Water, and American Rescue Plan Act funds from Luzerne County.

“The Huntsville Reservoir easement is a spectacular addition to existing conserved lands in the region,”

said Executive Director Ellen Ferretti. “Conserving the conifer forest and wetland along the northern, upstream portion of the Huntsville Reservoir protects this land that acts as a buffer around the reservoir, enhances the quality of the fresh water we drink and reduces the risks of soil erosion, runoff pollution, and regional flooding. The community values the beauty and significance of the reservoir and North Branch Land Trust is thrilled to conserve this resource. We thank Pennsylvania American Water for their partnership and contributions to make this conservation project a reality.”

“Pennsylvania American Water is committed to being a steward of our environment and protecting our watersheds,” said Justin Ladner, president, Pennsylvania American Water. “Preserving this land through our partnership with North Branch Land Trust not only supports our company’s mission to provide safe, clean drinking water, but also guarantees that future generations will continue to benefit from access to and conservation of the natural beauty of this local greenspace.”

220 +/- Acres of riparian buffer forest conserved

1 Mile of natural trail

7 Tributaries connect at the Reservoir

30,000 People serviced by the Reservoir

We are committed to preserving the beauty and environmental health of Pennsylvania for the benefit of future generations.

We are committed to achieving that goal by working in collaboration with individuals, organizations, businesses, communities, and governments on all levels.

We are committed to helping create a sustainable balance between economic growth and the healthy, natural surroundings that sustain flourishing communities.



CONSERVING LAND

Are you a landowner concerned with the future of your property?
This is what you need to know to get started on the protection of your land for generations to come.

What is a Land Trust?

A land trust is a charitable organization that works cooperatively with landowners to acquire land or easements and/or manage land or easements for conservation purposes.

Land trusts also work to ensure that land acquired or placed under easement is properly conserved.

They seek to bring lasting conservation benefits—permanent improvements—to communities.

What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement *conserves* land in the public interest, but the land stays in the *possession* and *control* of the private landowner.

A conservation easement is established by *mutual agreement* between a landowner and a land trust. The easement limits certain uses of the land in order to achieve the landowner's particular *conservation objectives*.

A conservation easement does not create a right for public access to a conserved property.

Who else might you want to talk to about Conservation Easements?

- Current NBLT Easement Holders
- Financial Planner or Tax Advisor
- Lawyer or Estate Planner

Protection Areas of a Conserved Property

Highest Protection Area: where the promotion of biodiversity and wildlife habitat is of prime concern—areas that are intended to be left wild or undisturbed.

Standard Protection Area: where the property will be available for a variety of open-space uses (such as active recreational, agricultural, and forestry uses) but will have limited Improvements.

Minimal Protection Area: where a higher degree of human activity (including some construction) will be permitted.

Getting Started

Contact

North Branch Land Trust
at info@nblt.org or give us
a call at 570-310-1781.

Our stewardship staff will talk you through the process to ensure that your conservation objectives are met.

Why Conserve?

Protect the land, water, wildlife,
and vistas you hold dear

Protect water quality

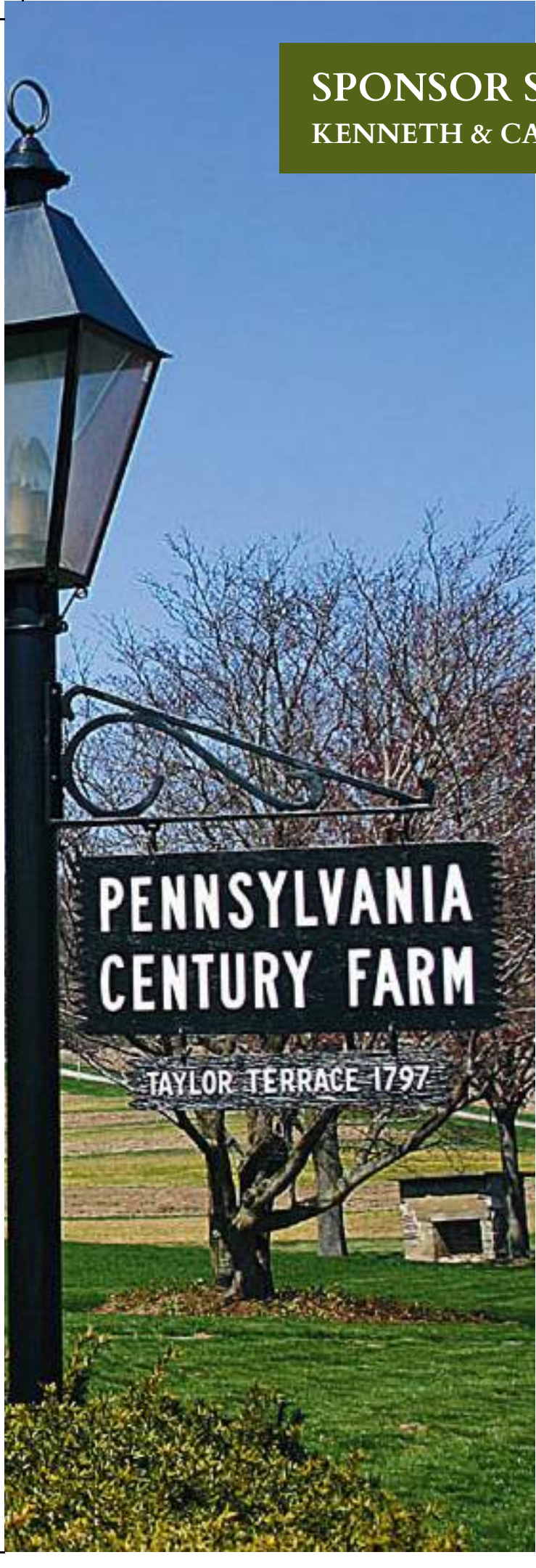
Conserve wildlife and habitat

Protect working farms and forests

Preserve scenic views

Reduce flooding

Potential tax benefits



SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: KENNETH & CAROLINE TAYLOR FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Kenneth & Caroline Taylor Family Foundation prides itself in being driven by the values of dedication, principled leadership, and a commitment to making a positive impact within the community. Since 2000, the Foundation has worked to become a source of inspiration and support for people who look to make a difference in their surrounding communities. Being an easement owner himself, Kenneth Taylor realizes the importance of giving back to the community and highlights the importance of working with an organization like North Branch Land Trust.

What is something about the Foundation that the people should know?

KT: “At the Foundation, we focus on supporting and giving back to local organizations—mainly in the Bradford County area. Based on our mission and from our website, we support a variety of issues pertaining to the environment and the community. Our primary interest has been in giving back to the rural community where our family has been for seven generations.”

Why partner with North Branch Land Trust?

KT: “I have always been interested in environmental issues and how the environment can be preserved for future generations. We have worked very closely with North Branch Land Trust dating back to 2005 when we placed an easement on our old family farm, most of which has been in our family since 1792. We are interested in protecting and maintaining our property in perpetuity and hope that our efforts along with our partnership with North Branch Land Trust will ensure that protection.”

The Taylor Century Farm, currently owned by the Taylor Family, is located in Wyalusing Township and remains an exceptional property as one of Bradford County’s historic landmarks.

With over 270 acres of corn fields, pastures and well-maintained barns, the property itself has become very recognizable to the public. Within the property there are also wetlands and forests which act as a habitat for many species native to northeastern Pennsylvania while also protecting the well-known Wyalusing Creek.

What is the importance of giving back to the community, like sponsoring North Branch Land Trust?

KT: “Giving back to the community has a multitude of benefits which many people may not recognize. Most importantly, lots of the money that organizations have given to the community goes towards development of local programs for all to benefit. As a foundation, we will continue to do our best to provide financial support to organizations which are important not only to the growth, but to the quality of life, in Bradford County and Northeastern Pennsylvania as a whole.”

North Branch Land Trust is grateful for the support of The Taylor Foundation & looks forward to many more years working together within the community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

for more information or to register, visit nblt.org/events, call (570) 310-1781 or email info@NBLT.org.



Monitoring Moths

Saturday, July 19 @ 8:30 PM

† **Butler Preserve | Hazle Twp. PA**

Spend an evening under the stars with NBLT and entomologist experts David Trently, Roxana Mery, and Staci Gibson for an engaging program of attracting, observing, and identifying local moths.



Yoga in the Forest

Sunday, August 10 @ 10:00 AM

† **George & Lillian Wildlife Sanctuary | Foster Twp. PA**

Join North Branch Land Trust for a morning of nature inspired yoga. Participants will learn more about our innate connection to nature while peacefully practicing yoga. We encourage you to bring your own yoga mat!



Natural Tie Dye:

A Coal Mine Run-Off Introduction

Saturday, September 27 @ 12:00 PM

† **George & Lillian Wildlife Sanctuary | Foster Twp. PA**

Enjoy an afternoon of educational conversation in partnership with Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR). Learn how our local lands were used for coal mining, (which led to acid mine drainage into our waterways). Afterwards, dye your very own North Branch Land Trust t-shirt using iron oxide pigments taken from the streams.



A Walk in Penns Woods & Brewery

Sunday, October 5 @ 10:00 AM

† **Pinchot State Forest | Mocanaqua, PA**

Join the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry for a late morning hike and admire the beauty of Pennsylvania's woods. Afterwards, enjoy a local brew at Five Mountain Brewing Company.



Producers, Consumers, Decomposers, *oh my!*

Saturday, October 25 @ 12:00 PM

📍 **Vosburg Neck State Park | Tunkhannock, PA**

Take a hike! Join NBLT at Vosburg Neck State Park, (formerly the NBLT Howland Preserve), and participate in a family-friendly event.

Learn more about nature's food chain during this educational walk within the state park.



Nature Trivia Night

📍 **TBD**

Test your Nature knowledge! Bring a group of up to 8 friends and meet NBLT for an evening of environmental-inspired trivia!

Stay tuned for more information on this event.



Native Wreath Forage

Saturday, December 6 @ 10:00 AM

📍 **ASTA Rimple Loop Trail | Dallas, PA**

Rejoice in nature's own embellishments. Participants will walk the ASTA Rimple Loop Trail, located behind North Branch Land Trust's headquarters, and forage natural items to decorate a wreath with just in time for the holidays. Afterwards, enjoy warm beverages and baked goods!



Nature Ornament Decorating

Saturday, December 13 @ 10:00 AM

📍 **ABIDE Coffeehouse | Wilkes-Barre, PA**

Spend an afternoon at Abide Coffeehouse and decorate your very own nature-inspired holiday ornament. Enjoy environmental education and artistic tips and tricks, or stop by and grab a coffee.

A percentage of the days profits will go to NBLT.

SAVE THE DATE
NORTH BRANCH LAND TRUST
ANNUAL DINNER & AUCTION
MAY 6, 2026

North Branch Land Trust presents

FAMILY NATURE WALKS

with The Greater Wyoming Valley YMCA

North Branch Land Trust & The Greater Wyoming Valley YMCA are thrilled to announce a **FREE** monthly nature based educational series of family-friendly walks, featuring diverse settings and specific topics. Walks will be led by NBLT's Leah Malarkey, Environmental Education Coordinator.

Birding at Butler – Saturday, July 12 @ 10:00 AM

Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails Parking, Hazle Township | Butler Preserve

“What Lives Here?” – Saturday, August 23 @ 11:00 AM

424 Pond Creek Rd, White Haven, PA 18661 | Picton Wildlife Sanctuary

What is a Wetland? – Saturday, September 13 @ 10:00 AM

Spencer Lane, Hanover TWP | Hanover Marsh Sanctuary

Nature Within The City – Saturday, October 11 @ 11:00 AM

Pittson, PA

“What’s Under That?” – Saturday, November 15 @ 11:00 AM

Greater Hazleton Rails to Trails Parking, Hazle Township | Butler Preserve

Bare Tree ID – Saturday, January 10 @ 10:00 AM

424 Pond Creek Rd, White Haven, PA 18661 | Picton Wildlife Sanctuary



For more information and to register, visit www.nblt.org or call (570) 310-1781.

GIVING BACK

NBLT COMMUNITY



Wyoming Seminary supports NBLT by cleaning up Forest Echo Bird Sanctuary

On February 26, 2025, Wyoming Seminary students and their chaperones, Cheryl Connolly (Director of Advancement) and Anne Lew (Associate Director of College Counseling and History Instructor) met with NBLT's Leah Malarkey (Environmental Education Coordinator) at Forest Echo Bird Sanctuary in Dallas, PA. Before the Wyoming Seminary students arrived, Leah Malarkey prepared gloves, orange vests, and mini pond nets to fish out any garbage that might have been flowing through the stream, while Wyoming Seminary guests brought garbage bags to collect any lingering litter.

After an introduction to North Branch Land Trust and what their mission is, "partnering with landowners, communities, and stakeholders to conserve and care for Northeastern Pennsylvania's lands and waters", students spent the day picking up litter and clearing nature trails, along with discussing the impact of air, water and land pollution. While the students were looking for litter, Leah would occasionally stop them to talk more about the sanctuary and natural items, such as trees, birds, and wildlife found at this location. "Wyoming Seminary has a diverse group of students, some of whom I found out live in China, among other countries. These students asked in-depth questions about the local environment. Many of these students either have not had the opportunity to be out in Pennsylvania's environment or experienced seeing wildlife.", stated Leah. Wyoming Seminary's service project wasn't just about picking up litter a local sanctuary but also connecting the students to our environment and how they can best protect it through education and hands-on volunteering experience.



Saying YES!

with NEPA Junior Achievement

On Friday, May 30, 2025, Ellen Ferretti, Executive Director of North Branch Land Trust, participated in YES! Day, hosted by Junior Achievement of Northeast Pennsylvania at Pittston Area Middle School. Students spent the day with volunteers where they learned about career-readiness, entrepreneurship and the importance of education, career, and financial decisions.



Leadership Northeast Conservation Collective

Thank You to RJ Hall of UGI, Alex Piehl of the Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce, Mark J. Hydock of the PA State Police, Yekaterina Chinikaylo of Luzerne County Head Start, Jennifer R. Fish of CVS Health, and Matthew Krispin of PA Inclusive: the driving force of Leadership Northeast Conservation Collective, for bringing our vision to fruition by creating conservation corners in the Back Mountain Memorial Library and Osterhout Free Library. This program allows youth in NEPA to get outside by utilizing backpacks equipped with informational guides and tools used to explore nature. Like a book, these backpacks can be checked out and enjoyed. This year's Leadership Northeast Conservation Collective provided incredible support to NBLT. Through their efforts, which included a backpack raffle & information table at Abide Coffeehouse, RailRiders ticket raffle, and volunteer support at The Annual Dinner, they have helped North Branch reach new heights and audiences.



Bob Sprague, native orchid expert



NBLT Board Members, staff & environmental friends with Bob Sprague



"Grass Pink" (Calopogon tuberosus)

IN BLOOM: Valmont Bog Sanctuary

North Branch Land Trust Board members, staff and friends joined Bob Sprague, native orchid expert, for an extraordinary, educational walk through NBLT's Valmont Bog Sanctuary on Tuesday, June 24. The bog is home to a vast variety of native orchids, along with rare species, which have been studied by botanists of The Smithsonian Institution and Longwood Gardens.

NBLT's "Valmont Bog" acquisition paved the way for an incredible public/private partnership which has yielded extraordinary results in the field of scientific research. The discovery of ten rare/endangered native orchid species (between North Branch Land Trust land and PPL land) turned the area into an overnight sensation in the world of botany. Inspired by NBLT's enlightened land purchase, under the leadership of the Native Orchid Conference and with the unparalleled cooperation of PPL, Valmont hosts visiting scientists from around the world. Longwood Gardens and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center conduct ongoing activity intended to achieve the goal of "Education, Conservation and Research". They are assisted by scores of local volunteers from scout troops, garden clubs and native plant societies, who are committed to the protection of "their" wild orchid population. They hold the hope that their efforts will result in expanded public displays of these beautiful flowers.

There is even the possibility that work conducted at Valmont will result in the ability to grow native orchids in home gardens."

-Bob Sprague



Raising Community Conservation Awareness

North Branch Land Trust conserves land in eight counties in Northeast Pennsylvania and early this year traveled to those places to tell people about our organization and mission. The organization launched Open Houses that successfully connected North Branch Land Trust to the communities and curious landowners.

Starting on March 12, the Land Trust held an Open House at Nimble Hill Brewery in Tunkhannock Township with attendees including NBLT members showing support, media including FOX56 and the Wyoming County Examiner and - importantly - landowners with questions about conservation.

A March 20 Open House was held at the spectacular Community Foundation of the Endless Mountains in Montrose, Susquehanna County. On May 8th we were at the Wyalusing Fire House in Bradford County, an event that was well attended and brought coverage from the Wyalusing Rocket-Courier newspaper. The Taylor Community Library was the site for a Lackawanna County event which brought more media coverage. The last two events were at The Hazleton Art League building on Broad Street and at the North Branch Land Trust office in the Dallas Township Municipal Building.

The Open House events were organized by Joe Butkiewicz, who began working for NBLT in January as Director of Community Engagement. "The framework for the events was previously established," said Butkiewicz. "It was just a matter of securing venues, light refreshments and social media and traditional media coverage. And then meet people where they live." Across all the open house events, landowners had similar questions: If I conserve my land is it open to the public?; does an easement include buildings?; what does it cost?

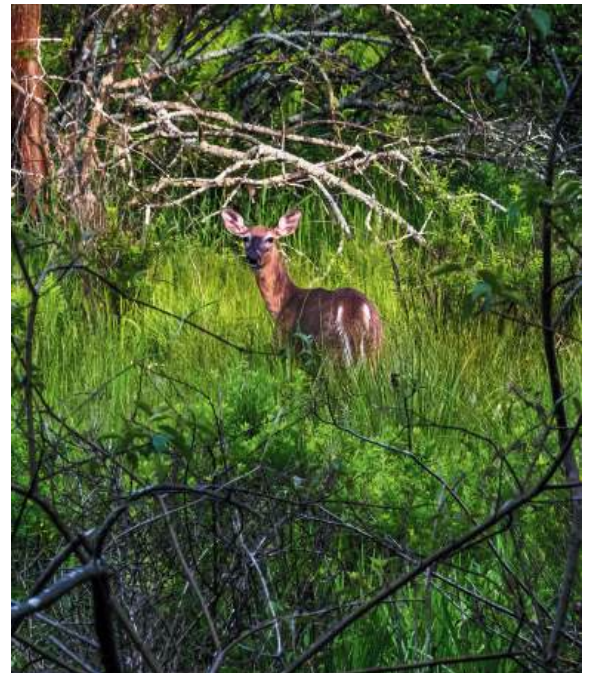
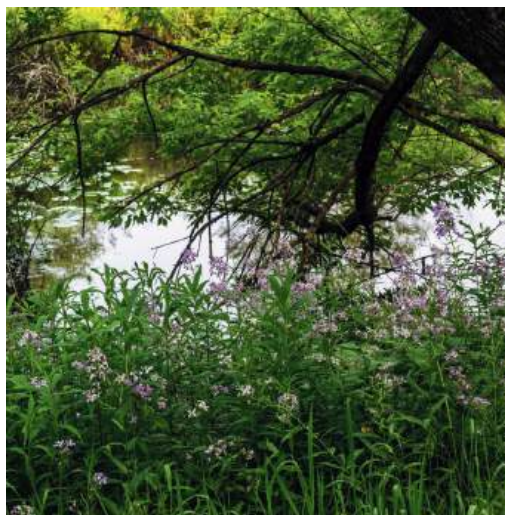
"The fruit of all this work was fulfillment of part of our Strategic Plan, meeting new landowners who expressed an interest in conserving their land, and lots of media coverage in all the counties," said Executive Director Ellen Ferretti. "We are planning ways to maintain our presence in our service counties and connect with new people."



Pictures Of Picton

GEORGE & LILLIAN PICTON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY
Foster Township • 349 Acres • Picton South Open to Public

The George and Lillian Picton Wildlife Sanctuary (South) is the larger of two parcels of land that make up the preserve. The majority of the sanctuary is forested with mature oak, sassafras, maple, ash, and birch. A very scenic pond occurs on the property that hosts fish, salamanders, turtles, frogs, freshwater mussels, rare damselflies and dragonflies, and an endangered freshwater sponge. Waterfowl use these ponds as resting and feeding wetlands and neo-tropical birds such as Roby Crowned Kinglets can be found by the dozens throughout the forest during their migration. Each spring, vernal pools found on the sanctuary are teeming with egg masses of spotted salamanders and wood frogs. George and Lillian Picton had a great appreciation for the peace and tranquility offered by their special parcel of land and a passion for the wildlife who call it home. Unsure of what might happen when they no longer owned their wonderful lands, they created their very own wildlife sanctuary. North Branch Land Trust worked with the George and Lillian Picton Estate to insure that the conservation wishes of George and Lillian are carried on forever.





April 22, 2025

An ode to Earth Day.

Volunteers from The Aqua Water Company and employees of North Branch Land Trust celebrated Earth Day in true conservationist fashion by planting a meadow of native pollinators and grasses at Picton Preserve, along with 30 plants donated by PPL Empowering Communities Program.

The crew worked tirelessly throughout the day to dig up grass, prep the area, and finally spread the seed and get the plants in the ground.

“Each April, Essential Utilities team members roll up their sleeves to volunteer at Earth Day events across the communities we serve. Our local Aqua Pennsylvania team, based in White Haven, partnered with the North Branch Land Trust to build a Pollinator Garden at the Picton Preserve. Pollinator gardens reduce the amount of mowing needed on the property, which reduces fuel costs and emissions, while also improving the wildlife habitat. The team at Aqua looks forward to partnering with NBLT again in the future,” stated David Hoogstad of Aqua Pennsylvania.

We are so grateful to Aqua for choosing NBLT for their service project and hope to partner again in the future. Thanks as well to PPL for all the plants that enrich the preserve and its habitat!



PADDLE & POUR

IDENTIFYING MACROINVERTEBRATES & UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANT OF FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEM HEALTH EDUCATIONAL EVENT SPOTLIGHT



On Saturday, June 21st, 2025, the North Branch Land Trust team spent the day at Moon Lake State Forest Recreation Area with Penn State Extension's Master Watershed Steward program for our "Paddle and Pour" event, where attendees learned the importance of maintaining healthy water systems and how to properly identify the diverse macroinvertebrates that inhabit them.



What are macroinvertebrates? And why are they important?

By formal definition, macroinvertebrates are any animal lacking a backbone that are large enough to be seen without the aid of a microscope. These cold-blooded creatures can be aquatic or terrestrial, and are extremely diverse in appearance.

Macroinvertebrates play an important role in maintaining NEPA's freshwater ecosystem health. They are considered a bioindicator, meaning their presence (or absence), provide significant insight into the overall health of a body of water and its surroundings.

"Macros" you may know:

Annelids: common earthworms, leeches
Freshwater crustaceans: crayfish, shrimp
Mollusks: freshwater mussels, slugs, snails
Odonates: dragonflies & damselflies
Other aquatic insects: mayflies, stoneflies, caddisflies



NEPA BARN BANQUET TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025



North Branch
Land Trust

Save The Date

NEPA BARN BANQUET

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

138 Wyoming Road, Dallas PA 18612

AT FRIEDMAN FARMS

Join North Branch Land Trust
at the 4th annual Barn Banquet
in celebration of NEPA's agricultural heritage.
Help support NBLT's long-standing tradition of
conserving our local farmlands and rich
agricultural assets.

More information to follow.



FRIEDMAN
HOSPITALITY GROUP

