

# Hedgerows

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## VARIETY IN THE VALLEY

Caryl Brackenridge

The Land Trust presented our third annual "Variety in the Valley" show on November 8, 2003. Eric Kaiser was our able MC and the first performers were Sara Steele on the keyboard and Rebecca Snead on the harmonica. John Gray Reed led the Trinity Americana Troupe in patriotic song, followed by an amazing performance by juggler Michael Lefkowitz. The audience also appreciated the barbershop quartet "Scarred for Life," whose members were Jensen Gelfond, Michael and Jesse Mazzariello, and Murray Natkie. The evening



The Trinity Americana Troupe performing at the *Variety in the Valley* show.

ended with two excellent performances, Rashi Grewal on the flute and a violin duet by Lew Gelfond and Rob O'Connell.

You won't want to miss our fourth annual show, coming in November 2004.

Jen and Ada Rose Wagar enjoying the talent show.



### Did You Know

There have been seven historic droughts in the last 100 years in New Jersey. Each drought lasted 3 years or more. The year in which the droughts began were: 1908, 1916, 1923, 1929, 1964, 1980 and 2000.

We remember the drought of 2000 – 2003. We can still visualize the photos in the newspapers; Spruce Run reservoir, dry;

Wanaque reservoir, dry; Boonton reservoir, dry. It was the driest period in 33 years, with many stream base flows at record lows. Hundreds of domestic wells ran dry. Of those 7 historic droughts, the drought of 2000–2003 was the **least** severe of the century. Just think what the next drought will be like if we do not protect our water supply.

## 8th Annual NJ Land Conservation Rally

Tim Morris

On March 27th, New Jersey's Land Conservation community gathered in Trenton for the 8th Annual Land Conservation Rally. Trustees Jon Wagar and Tim Morris of the Washington Township Land Trust were in attendance.

"The annual rally is a great opportunity to learn the skills of land preservation, and connect with other land conservationists", reported Jon.

Workshops were offered on such topics as the mechanics of land and easement acquisitions, funding sources, conservation planning, and natural resource protection. WTLT trustee Jon Wagar and Washington Township Committee-woman and land trust liaison Kim Ball Kaiser presented workshops.

This year's rally featured a keynote address by Stephan J. Small, Esq., conservation easement expert and author of *Preserving Family Lands*, a classic primer of land conservation. Rally participants were treated to a workshop on conservation easements presented by Mr. Small, the drafter of the IRS conservation easement regulations.

This year's national rally will be held in Providence, RI in October.

### Welcome to our New Members

John W. Blaiklock  
William J. Dunne  
Carl & Ann Marie Koch  
Murray Reed  
Neil M. Szigethy  
Vincent Tamburri  
Fred & Marcie Vance

## Mission Statement

The Washington Township Land Trust was organized to protect and preserve the ecological, cultural, and historical integrity of the areas that contribute to and enhance the rural character of Washington Township and its environs. The Trust also promotes public interest in conserving land for open space uses in harmony with the natural environment and acquires interests in land by purchase or donation. It also manages land and property easements for the benefit of the public and educates the public to be stewards of the land.

### 2004 OFFICERS

#### PRESIDENT

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### Land Trust Merchandise

The Land Trust fund raising committee has created a number of unique items for sale.

Brownie, cookie and soup mixes  
\$5 each

The Purity flour bag (size: 6" x 11")  
\$3 each

also available, tee shirts, beer glasses, sweatshirts

call Caryl Brackenridge for more details 908.876.4478

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### November

#### Variety In The Park

Annual Land Trust talent show. Watch for details

#### December

#### 2004 Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner

## Thank You For A Year Of Part Time Staffing

The land trust would like to recognize the New Jersey Conservation Foundation ("NJCF") and the Doris Duke Charitable Trust ("Duke") for their support during 2003. Duke provided a grant to NJCF for an innovative program called Shared Staffing, which provided an experienced staff person to three local New Jersey land trusts that otherwise rely largely on volunteers.

Washington Township Land Trust, an organization run solely by volunteers, benefited greatly from the help of NJCF staff person, Tim Morris. "Tim was able to jumpstart a number of important land protection projects throughout the township", according to land trust president Keith Hayes. "The land trust is currently working on four ambitious projects that total almost 400 acres of our remaining critical open space parcels."

"I've really enjoyed being able to devote so much time to working on land preservation efforts in my home town", added Tim, who grew up in the Long Valley. Tim currently lives in Somerset County, and will continue to work with the land trust in a volunteer capacity.

## Mill Restoration

Volunteer work at the mill was slowed somewhat this winter by subfreezing temperatures but we are now back to work on most Saturdays between 10 am and 4 pm. Two new volunteers, Chris Cornetta and Neil Szigethy, and regular volunteer Ken Steffan have considerable carpentry skills which is immensely helpful. The rest of us contribute less skilled carpentry, or work involving masonry, painting, scraping window frames, digging out old glazing, sweeping, moving lumber and other fun things like that. No matter what we contribute, all of us share a sense of pride in restoring a 1750 building that will enable future generations to learn about Long Valley history. If you have a few hours here or there, we'd love to have you join us and share this neat experience. For information, call Chris Steffan (832-9603) or Caryl Brackenridge (876-4478).



Volunteer Jeff Donat from Allentown Pa, removing siding from south wall of the mill.

## New Trustees

Two new Trustees, Kriss Olsen and Mark Paris, were elected at our thirteenth Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner on December 12, 2003. As usual, the food was great and the meeting was very short. Trustees reelected for three more years were Shirley Gillette, Bill Harrington, Lois Kramer, Stanley Kramer, Karen Richards, Jen Wagar and Jon Wagar. Stan Andrews was named Trustee Emeritus. Officers elected for 2004 were President Keith Hayes, Vice President Karen Richards, Treasurer Chris Steffan, and Secretary Caryl Brackenridge.



# Spring Has Arrived...

## Get Out and Enjoy It!

Tim Morris

*Yes, Spring is here. Just listen to the birds singing outside your door on the next sunny morning. They know Spring has arrived by the increasing day length. You will hear the Titmice calling in the backyard, "peter, peter, peter", or the Chickadees with their melodic whistle, "fee-bee, fee-bay"? Spring is the time for many local year-round resident birds to find a mate. A few birds, such as Bald Eagles and Great-horned Owls are already busy feeding a nest full of young.*

The American Woodcock is another local resident bird that's feeling the romance of spring. Take a walk in an old overgrown field or open woodlands around dusk, and listen for nasal "peent" call of the male woodcock trying to woo a mate.



**American Woodcock**

*Scolopax minor*

**Length:** 10.5 - 11"

**Habitat:**

Moist, early-successional woodlands near open fields or forest clearings; abandoned fields, brushy forest openings, wooded edges of streams and ponds, brushy edges of open swamps.

**Habitat requirements:**

Clearings for courtship displays and nighttime rooting. Areas of soft, moist soil containing earthworms and with overhead cover. Young, open woodlands for nesting.

**Diet:**

Earthworms (staple); insects, especially larvae of beetles and flies; spiders, millipedes, snails; some seeds and berries.

Overgrown fields such as those in Hacklebarney State Park are a great place to hear this unique courtship. You might be surprised to learn that this cryptic woodland bird is actually a shorebird, closely related to sandpipers.

Many other bird species will soon be returning from their winter ranges. Some, like Tree Swallows and Eastern Phoebes, have only traveled short distances to the southeastern U.S., and will return early in the season - the true harbingers of spring! Robins are actually here all winter; you just don't see them in your yard because they retreat to the forest to find berries and other winter foods.

Other species, like warblers, vireos, and flycatchers will travel all the way from Central and South America. The peak arrival time for these birds is early May. Try looking for migrant songbirds in the mature oak trees in Schooley's Mountain Park (they gorge on the insects attracted to the newly formed oak flowers). Another good place to look for migrants is in brushy areas near ponds or streams. The land trust's Mill Pond Park off of Fairview Road is a great place due to its location along the South Branch of the Raritan River.

The amphibians know that its spring as well. Spring peepers, a tiny tree frog, began calling in early March. You can best hear their chorus in the evening around ponds, wetlands, and vernal pools. Early in the season you can hear them during the day as well. Each peeper, bursts out with its single high pitch "Peep!" that is much louder than you'd expect from a little frog that can sit comfortably on the end of your finger. If you've ever crept up on a pool filled with these frogs, you know their chorus can be deafening. The wetland forest along the

Columbia Trail, which follows the old railroad bed through town from Califon to Bartley, is an ideal place to listen to peepers.

Our area is rich in wildlife, and by protecting the lands that are important wildlife habitat, we hope to contribute to its continued abundance. As spring continues to unfold, I hope that you'll get outside and enjoy all of the natural wonders that help to make Washington Township such an enjoyable place to live.

### What is a Vernal Pool?

*"Spring is full of surprises. One of them is the vernal pool. You may have walked through one on a warm summer day and never gotten your feet wet. That's because the vernal pool is temporary. The word 'vernal' means 'occurring or appearing in the spring.' So a vernal pool is a contained basin of water, fed by melting snow and rain, that appears in the spring. The vernal pool lacks a permanent outlet, so in the warm-weather months the water soaks into the ground or evaporates. At one moment in time, it may be teeming with life—a month later, it may be little more than damp depression in the woods, covered with leaves. But during its brief life as a wetland, the vernal pool serves as a vital link in the life cycle of many amphibians and other woodland animals. ..."*

Source:  
<http://www.montshire.net>

also see <http://www.vernalpool.org>

## Mill Park Update Keith Hayes, President WTLT

In late March, I took a walk in the park to check on the progress of our 2002 fall planting of 25 Black Gum and 25 Swamp White Oak trees. I had last checked on them in late August but was unable to locate more than one due to the heavy weed growth.

Unfortunately, it appears that the deer have had a feast of our seedlings. At least 80% of them are missing. Luckily about 6 have survived near the Helen Andrews Memorial garden and a couple of these are quite robust. A few are in other areas, but I would be surprised if more than 10 are still living throughout the park.

We will have to come up with a stronger defense against the deer if we hope to save any of the remaining trees.

Also at this time, the established plant life in the park shows very vigorous growth since last summer. The wet year seems to have been favorable to the multiflora roses, blackberries, raspberries, wineberries and the elderberries. The birds can expect to have a feast this summer.

Upon entering the park, I came across a Painted Turtle on one of the paths. It was about 6" long and at first I thought it was just keeping still until I had passed, but upon closer inspection I found that it was dead. I looked for signs of injury or trauma, but it appeared intact. I'm hoping that it died from natural causes and is not a sign of some environmental disturbance.

Also, quite a bit of trash has washed into the park this winter. With the abundant growth along the trails and the large amount of garbage, it looks like we need a good sized group of volunteers to take a day and restore our park.

And lastly, the Daffodils in the Helen Andrews garden are within weeks of being in full bloom. I will get a picture of them in the next couple of weeks for our next newsletter.

## Fly Fishing An Environmental Awareness Tool?

Paul Krylowski

For years I looked forward to the opening day madness that was the official beginning of trout fishing in New Jersey. Actually the fishing season is only closed for a few weeks in March when streams and lakes are restocked with trout. It reopens on the second Saturday in April and is usually evident by the shoulder to shoulder fishermen lining our local streams. The restocking continues on a weekly basis until June when it ceases for another year. Sometimes a fall stocking occurs but not of the same magnitude as in the spring.

On one of those wonderful trips, during the inevitable lull in the action, I decided to watch another fisherman. This man was not "drowning worms" (fishing live bait) as I was, he was fly fishing. I watched him stealthfully move upstream until he reached his destination. He paused to view the water and then started the graceful motions of moving his flyline in ever widening arcs until the last surge of body and form shot the line forward in a gentle extension, where it delicately descended upon the water. Wow, I thought. I must try that someday. It looked like a lot of fun.

Well I did try it and as I was warned by others who had fallen to its calling, it consumed me. I sought knowledge to improve my successes. I began collecting materials to tie my own flies; muskrat, mink, beaver, ostrich herl, hen hackles, duck feathers, and goose quills. The list was never ending and constantly growing.

The local fishing holes were no longer any good, I began to explore, move to different locations. Searching for rising (feeding) fish so I could maybe get a chance to place my fly within reach of my quarry.

I started following hatches. Seeking out fishing waters at a certain time of the year when mayfly, caddisfly and stonefly emergences will occur. These insect emergences can trigger trout into a feeding frenzy and can make a trip very successful. But it is not that easy and they told me this. But what they failed to tell me and I soon learned, "not all is as it appears".

The stocked waters I fished for years were not as clean and pure as I had thought. Mayflies did not rise from their surfaces nor could trout live throughout the entire year in their polluted environments. It was a sad revelation. A good majority of New Jersey's waters were in such sad shape, aquatic insects essential to many life forms existence, were non-existent.

Fly fishing opened my eyes to the condition of our waters and got me headed on the environmental awareness path. There were times I spoke up at meetings and remember one planning board member, a neighbor and friend, would roll her eyes when I mentioned fishing. I could see by her reaction she did not understand the connection between fishing and a *healthy* environment.



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