

Hedgerows

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Mill Update

by Caryl Brackenridge



Judging by the honks and thumbs up from passing motorists while we were painting windows at the mill last Saturday, some people have noticed that the building is looking better these days.

Under our grant from the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund, we have restored the structural framing of the 1750 section's facade, completed restoration of the first floor framing and flooring, and restored the siding on the lower portion of the facade. The last scope of work under this grant is to restore the soffit and trim on the facade and install eleven more windows.

If you haven't noticed our new look, check it out next time you drive by!



The Insignificant Little Brook

by Paul Krylowski



It may appear to be nothing more than a little brook, an insignificant little stream of water meandering it's way down a mountainside but to some it may be the difference between life and death.

Everyone has seen programs documenting the Alaskan Salmon runs with hundreds of brightly colored fish migrating up river to spawn. But how many people are aware that similar events occur in New Jersey. Not with Salmon but with other members of the the Salmonid family; Rainbow, Brook and Brown trout.

The photo at the left was taken in New Jersey and illustrates the importance of protecting the State's small open water courses. The Brook Trout in the photo has moved into a small stream to spawn. The fish is only 9 inches long and part of it's dorsal fin and tail are even breaking the water surface. The fish is in water less than 3 inches deep.

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This spawning Brook Trout was captured on video by Wendell. Courtesy of Wendell "Oz" Ozefovich.

visit the Land Trust web site at
www.wtlit.org

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.

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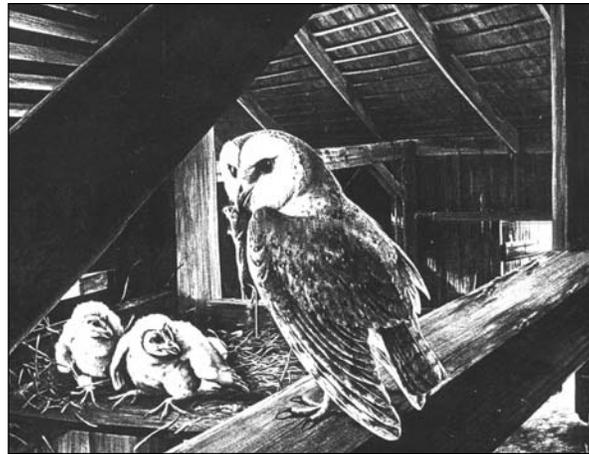
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Long Valley, NJ 07853
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Washington Township Land Trust would like to welcome the following new members of our organization. Their support as members helps us continue with our land preservation efforts as well as the restoration of the Obadiah LaTourette Grist Mill. An extra thank you to those people who kindly donated funds, in addition to their membership dues.

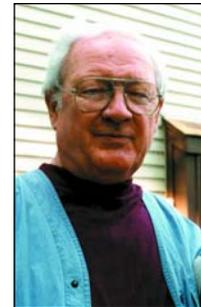
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Owls in the rafters of a barn is a drawing by Don Waters. The barn referenced in this drawing would eventually become the Long Valley Brew Pub. Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. J. Brackenridge.



Donald Jordan Waters

The Washington Township Land Trust lost a good friend when Don Waters of Middle Valley died on September 13, 2005.

Don was an artist, whose paintings of birds in their natural habitats are displayed in museums around the world, including "La Pietra" in Florence and the Vatican Museum in Rome. His painting of the official New Jersey State bird, "Goldfinch on Thistle," was commissioned for the New Jersey State Museum.

As a native of New Jersey and a long-time resident of Middle Valley, Don found inspiration for many of his paintings in the local landscape. In 1994, the Land Trust Board decided to sell a poster as a fundraiser and we asked Don if we could use one of his paintings. He offered to donate the use of any painting in his portfolio and we chose "The Dufford Farm" because it embodies the farmland and open space we are trying so hard to preserve.

Don also participated in several art shows to help us raise funds, and attended almost all of our social functions over the last ten years. In addition to being a gifted artist, he was a warm and charming person and he will be missed.

Jack Borgenicht

Jack Borgenicht was the youngest of 14 children and was born in Hunter, New York, in 1911. He died on August 25, 2005, just before his 94th birthday. Jack was known for his keen business sense and his love of a challenge. The successes and failures of his business career, the decisions he made, the things he learned and the advice he imparted could enthrall an audience.

In 1995, Jack approached the Land Trust and expressed his interest in our restoration of the Obadiah LaTourette Grist and Saw Mill. He wanted to know how he could help and we explained that we had been unable to attract grants because we did not have a source of matching funds. He then pledged \$50,000 a year for three years if we could match it. That pledge enabled us to apply for and receive \$173,000 in matching funds from the New Jersey Historic Trust.

We will always be deeply grateful for Jack's timely generosity and we are saddened by the loss of this vibrant, fascinating man.



UPCOMING EVENTS

December 9

2005 Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner

Our usual location, the MVCC building, is undergoing restoration and will not be available. Watch for details on our web site www.wtlt.org

WANTED FUND RAISING IDEAS

The Land Trust needs help with fund raising and would appreciate input from our membership. If you have any ideas on how the organization can generate operating capital, the Board of Trustees eagerly awaits your suggestions.

They would also be interested in hearing from any person who has an interest in helping with fund raising programs.

Send your suggestions to:

obadiah1750@hotmail.com

Thank you.

American Chestnut *Castanea dentata*

by Keith Hayes



What a surprise! This was a “Chestnut Research Orchard”, a test plot of potentially disease resistant American chestnut. A tree that I had never seen, never expected to see, and one that I thought was lost forever. This was one of many research orchards, throughout the Eastern United States, planted by The American Chestnut Foundation. This is part of their ongoing effort to develop a blight resistant American chestnut tree.

The American chestnut was once the dominant tree of the Eastern Forests. It was among the tallest and the most abundant, it was thought that one in every 5 forest trees was a chestnut. It was nicknamed the “redwood of the east” because a mature chestnut tree would be well over 100 feet tall, with a trunk of 6-8 feet in diameter and they could live for up to 600 years.

The wood from the chestnut was used for post and beam framing of barns and homes, the crafting of furniture, musical instruments, barrels, telephone poles, ships masts, railroad ties and shingles. The wood was extremely rot resistant. Chestnut bark supplied more than half of the bark used to produce tannic acid which was used in the tanning of leather.

The fruit of the chestnut was extremely important to both humans and wildlife. The familiar “Chestnuts roasting on an

open fire” comes from the popularity of chestnuts during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons. It is known that carloads of chestnuts were shipped by train to New York City from the Appalachian region during the holiday seasons. Besides human consumption, they were a very important part of the diet of wild turkeys, bear, deer, squirrels and many other animals. A mature tree could produce up to 10 bushels of nuts. The chestnuts sold in stores today are actually Chinese chestnuts; in comparison, the American chestnut is only about 1/2 to 2/3 the size of the Chinese chestnut. It is also thought that the American chestnut tastes sweeter.

The American chestnut prefers the climate and the soils of the north eastern forests. The tree easily reaches heights of 100 feet tall and they will live for many hundreds of years. They have simple (single), toothed (serrated edge) leaves of a medium green color, with both male and female flowers being produced on the same tree. The flowers are long creamy white arching catkins produced in great abundance, these cross pollinate with other trees by the action of the wind. When the flowers fall, they drop in such abundance as to coat the forest floor in what looks like snow. The pollinated flowers then develop into prickly spine covered burs, each containing up to 3 chestnuts.

Driving along route 24 in Chester, I kept noticing some small trees planted in protective yellow tubes. I was curious as to why they were there, what type of tree they were, and why were they so important as to be given deer protection. I never found the time to stop but I did think about them every time that I passed by. Then, as I drove by again, I noticed a small sign in front of them. My curiosity got the best of me and I turned the car around. I went back to the trees and parked on the side of the road.

Around 1904, Chestnut trees in New York began to die from an unknown fungal disease, the disease quickly spread throughout the Northeast. By World War II, almost the entire population of Chestnut trees in the United States was dead. Today, there are just a few isolated groups of mature chestnut trees left. The disease was caused by a fungus, *Cryphonectria parasitica*, now commonly known as Chestnut Blight. The blight was most likely imported from Asia on Chinese chestnut trees which are resistant to the disease. As a result of the Chestnut blight, the Plant Quarantine Act of 1912 was passed. This law restricts the importation of many kinds of plants and allows for the distribution of imported plants only after a waiting period and inspection for diseases and pests.

The American Chestnut Foundation was founded in 1983 with the goal of creating a blight resistant American chestnut tree. In 1989 they opened their first research farm in Virginia. The foundation is trying to create this blight resistant tree by using genetic material from the blight resistant Chinese chestnut. They are using a process called back crossing. The foundation describes the process as follows;

“In short, it takes several generations to do this genetic transfer. In each generation, the disease resistant trees are crossed to American trees. Then resistant trees are

American Chestnut

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chosen from among the offspring, and the cross is made again. Each cross to American chestnut trees makes the offspring more like an American chestnut tree and less like a Chinese chestnut tree. The process continues until blight resistant, American-type trees are produced. It takes at least six years to grow and test each set of trees.”

It will most likely take many more decades before the Blight resistant American chestnut tree is produced. Forests of 100’ tall trees will not be seen in our lifetimes, but we are fortunate to be able to view the smaller trees in the Chester test plot. If you do go to see the small trees, look around at the variety of mature trees growing in the area and realize that one day these small trees (if blight resistant) will be almost twice as tall as anything that you can see.

*For more in formation on the American Chestnut Foundation
www.acf.org*

The Insignificant Little Brook

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Aside from cool clean oxygenated water, spawning trout require streams and brooks with fine gravel bottoms. When areas become heavily silted, trout can no longer spawn in those locations. Silt is a form of non-point source pollution and can come from numerous sources.

One potential source is not only a producer of silt but can create an obstacle to migrating fish... the dam. Though visions of the Grand Hoover may come to mind, I am referring to small structures landowners create to beautify landscapes or create pools. Though building such structures is no longer legal this does not stop the uninformed individual from reshaping the landscape. This single action can wipe out the access to spawning beds (redds) of trout and in turn can affect other wildlife which are dependent upon those spawning fish.

It is a small world and getting smaller, especially in New Jersey and we all must practice good stewardship to protect the wildlife of our area. If you have a small feeder stream on your property consider protecting it from excessive silt load and dam structures.

Become a Member

Memberships (headcount, dues and donations) are vital for our projects and matches for grants to which we apply. If you are not yet a member of the Land Trust, please use the form and join us now. Thank you all for your support.

③ Mail to:

Washington Township Land Trust
PO Box 4
Long Valley, NJ 07853-0004

*Volunteers and Professional Services
Needed. Contact any WTLT officer for*

details or email us:

obadiah1750@hotmail.com

*Please mention WTLT in the
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