

Hedgerows

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Support Local Land Conservation

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STATE FILES LAWSUITS SEEKING COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES POLLUTERS CAUSED TO NATURAL RESOURCES

(07/37) TRENTON - The state has filed approximately 120 lawsuits that could result in hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation from polluters who have harmed New Jersey's natural resources, including numerous manufacturers and marketers of the gas-line additive MTBE, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Lisa P. Jackson announced today.



We are committed to holding accountable those polluters whose actions have sullied our rivers, land and ground water, diminishing public enjoyment of these natural resources," Commissioner Jackson said. "Working closely with the Attorney General's office, we will aggressively pursue these claims through the court system until the public has been justly compensated for its losses."



Mill Update

by Keith Hayes

50/50 Raffle to Help Preserve Open Space and Restoration of the LaTourette Mill

The WTLT is introducing its first 50/50 fundraising raffle. We will be selling these tickets at various locations around town and at our table at the Fall Festival. Tickets may be purchased from any of the trustees and may also be purchased by mail (see below or www.WTLT.org for purchase information).

The tickets are \$10 each and the winning prize will be 1/2 of all funds raised. Will it be \$500? \$1000?, \$5000?. \$10,000? Or more? That question will be answered on November 3rd, 2007 when we draw the lucky winning ticket. The drawing will be held at 10 am at the LaTourette Gristmill. While it is not as exciting as a \$200 million mega millions jackpot; your odds are much better... plus you will be helping out a very good local cause. Please be generous and purchase your tickets when you see us, or go online to WTLT.org for more information.

Contact Chris Steffan at obadiah1750@hotmail.com for tickets

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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Seventeenth Annual Meeting

The Seventeenth Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner will be held December 14, 2007. Make plans to attend and check our web site for the hall location under the Events page link.

Color versions of this and past newsletters are available at www.wtl.org



The 2nd Annual Wine Tasting Event

was held at Schooley's Mountain Lodge on Saturday, April 21, 2007 in Long Valley, New Jersey

We held our second wine tasting which was well received by all accounts. It is fast becoming our key annual fund raiser and plans are in the works for another event next year. The fund raising team lead by Chris Steffan did a wonderful job bringing the offerings of Peapack Fine Wines, the food from Valley Restaurant and the music of Susan Lembo & Richard Paul together in a idealistic country setting. Here are a few of the photos which were taken during the tasting. More will be uploaded to our web site, www.wtl.org.



A special thank you to our supporting sponsors who made this event possible.

Photos courtesy of Dana Romash

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA CREEPER?

by Keith Hayes



Can you find the Virginia Creeper? Virginia Creeper and Poison Ivy both share space on this tree trunk.



Virginia Creeper also known as woodbine.

OK, it's not as frightening as cocktails at George and Martha's, but for many people it can be just as scary. And it's

all due to a case of mistaken identity with something that should be avoided at all costs; Poison Ivy.

Virginia creeper, (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) also known as woodbine, is a woody vine which grows throughout the eastern and central United States. It is a native plant, commonly found growing in the wild, but it is often planted to cover walls; many of the "Ivy" League colleges have walls covered in Virginia creeper, not English ivy. As a landscape plant, it is valued for its intense red fall color and its ability to stick to any wall surface. The ends of the vines have small forked tendrils, tipped with adhesive pads, which glue themselves to smooth or rough surfaces. The vines can reach up to 50 feet in height and can often be seen climbing high into trees.

The deciduous leaves appear in clusters of 3 to 5 leaflets and are about 1-1/2" to 4" long, they are a lustrous dark green color and new growth is a shiny reddish green. The new growth is very difficult to tell apart from poison ivy and a quick glance at mature growth is very confusing also. Luckily, there are two distinct methods to tell the difference. The first is that Virginia creeper has a majority of 5 leaflet leaves; only the new growth may have 3 leaflets like poison ivy. The second is that poison ivy has smooth or gently toothed edges to the leaves while Virginia creeper always has distinctly toothed edges to the leaves.

In the summer, Virginia creeper produces small greenish white flowers that are usually completely hidden by the foliage. In the fall, there are numerous blue/black berries about 1/8" in diameter which become noticeable after the leaves drop. The berries are poisonous to mammals but are an important food source for birds.

So, next time you see a "poison ivy" vine starting to climb up a tree in your yard, take a very close look before you decide its fate.



Poison Ivy – *Rhus radicans*

Poison Ivy is a native plant which can be found growing along the ground, climbing fence posts or twining up tree trunks to a height of more than 50 feet. Considering that the plant was given this rather unpleasant name by Captain John Smith in 1609, we can assume that it has been an irritant in this country since colonial times.

The plant can be identified by a variety of ways, the most common being the three leaflets. The old saying "leaflets three, let it be" is a very wise statement. The vine always has compound leaves consisting of three leaflets, the middle leaflet being held on a stem much longer than the side two leaflets. The leaves are usually about 2-1/2" to 4" long, the edges can be smooth or toothed and they may be shiny or dull. The foliage starts out reddish in the spring and develops into a deep green color during the summer. The fall color is usually a brilliant yellow but can also be orange or red.

The plant is easily recognizable when it climbs a tree. The vine attaches itself to the trunk by means of countless short aerial rootlets and has the appearance of a frayed rope. Another saying "hairy rope, don't be a dope" is very appropriate. The climbing vines are usually about 1" to 2" thick but can become up to 6" thick over time. The vines which spread over the ground or hang out from the "hairy rope" do not have these rootlets.

The plant produces very distinctive small berries in the fall. These are almost unique among plants in that they are a waxy, white, cluster of berries. These berries follow the small greenish clusters of flowers produced close to the leaf bases in the summer. The fruit of the plant is a favorite of birds, accounting for the plants wide distribution. The seed pass through the animals digestive system then fall to the ground to produce a new plant.

The active ingredient of poison ivy which produces the common rash is known as Urushiol Oil. It is produced

by all parts of the plants from the roots to the berries. The oil can stay active on surfaces or dead plant parts for up to 5 years. Only 1 billionth of an ounce is needed to cause a rash, while 1/4 ounce could give a rash to every person on earth. Poison ivy sensitivity is the most common allergy in the country. A common misconception is that the rash is contagious. It is not, it can only be passed on if the person has the Urushiol oil on their skin or clothing.

Hairy rope, don't be a dope

While many herbal folk remedies and prescription medications for poison ivy rashes exist, the best solution is to properly identify the plant and to avoid it. While it is a serious nuisance to humans, it is a valuable plant in the wild and should be allowed to grow where it does not come in direct contact with humans. Some magnificent specimens exist in the Mill Pond Park, enjoy them but remember "leaflets three, let it be" and "hairy rope, don't be a dope".



Tadpoles in a pond are a good sign of a healthy environment. Photo © 2007 Paul Krylowski

State Files Lawsuits (continued from page 1)

Attorney General Anne Milgram added: "We are working with DEP to ensure that contaminated properties are cleaned up and restored, and that, where appropriate, polluters compensate the residents of New Jersey for the loss of precious natural resources."

The lawsuits, known as natural resource damage claims, seek compensation above and beyond cleanup costs and fines that DEP levies against polluters. DEP uses money from natural resource damage settlements toward ecological restoration projects, typically in the same watershed or general area where resource damages occur.

One of the lawsuits specifically targets scores of designers and manufacturers of the gasoline additive methyl tertiary butyl ether as well as major-brand refiners and marketers of gasoline that used MTBE, including Amerada Hess, Atlantic Richfield Co., BP America, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Getty, Shell, Texaco and Valero Energy.

With this particular lawsuit, New Jersey becomes the third state to file complaints seeking natural resource damages for the recovery of all past and future costs to investigate, remediate and restore natural resources damaged by the discharge of MTBE.

Among other companies facing natural resource damage lawsuits are Ciba Geigy Specialty Chemicals in Dover, Ocean County; the Bayway refinery in Linden, Union County; Gloucester City Titanium in Gloucester City, Camden County; Landfill & Development Co. in Lumberton, Mount Holly and Eastampton, Burlington County; as well as Dow/Union Carbide in Middlesex Borough and Piscataway Township, Middlesex County.

The state's lawsuits take a special focus on polluters that have damaged river resources. Lawsuits have been filed against ISP Environmental Services and G-I Holdings Inc., located in Linden along Piles Creek near the

Arthur Kill; Mallinckrodt Baker, along the Delaware River in Phillipsburg, Warren County; Genstar Gypsum, located along the Delaware River in Camden, Camden County; and Rhone Poulenc along the Raritan River in Middlesex Borough.

"These companies have left a legacy of pollutants in sediments ranging from PCBs and pesticides to volatile chemicals and hydrocarbons," Commissioner Jackson said. "Clean rivers are vital to a vibrant economy and a healthy environment."

Since its inception in 1994, DEP's Natural Resource Damage program has recovered more than \$51 million and preserved approximately 6,000 acres of open space as wildlife habitat and ground water recharge areas as compensation for pollution resulting from 1,500 contaminated sites and oil spills.

Under DEP's technical rules, all parties responsible for polluting a site must conduct a thorough analysis to determine the nature and extent of pollution. Once this remedial investigation is completed, DEP has 5 years to file a lawsuit to recover damages to natural resources if the responsible party does not restore the injured resource before then.

The Legislature recognized that remedial investigations were completed at some sites many years ago without the filing of natural resource damage lawsuits. Consequently, the Legislature provided a mechanism that required filing of lawsuits within 5 years of Jan. 1, 2002. The lawsuits include sites evaluated by DEP and the Attorney General's office as being affected by this deadline, which expires Saturday.

DEP and the Attorney General's office continue to file new natural resource damage claims as remedial investigations are completed.

For a listing and electronic versions of individual lawsuits, go to: <http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases07/NRD-lawsuits-07/>.



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