



ClearWater Conservancy

Everyone working together to conserve natural beauty and the environment in the heart of Pennsylvania

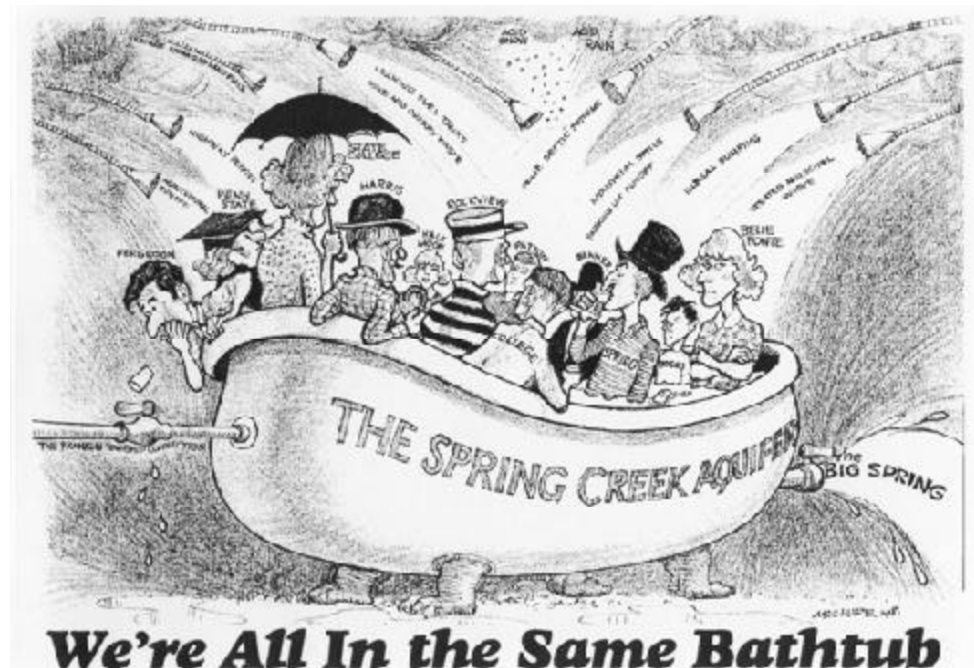
# ClearWater Conservancy: A Look Back in Time 1980 - 2003

ClearWater Conservancy is a non-profit organization that focuses on land conservation, watershed stewardship, and environmental outreach in central Pennsylvania. The group formed in 1980, following a local land use controversy that taught concerned citizens the logistics of the local government's involvement with land planning and water resource issues.

Over the years, ClearWater has evolved into a successful land trust that boasts a large volunteer base, a professional staff, and a wide range of expertise among its board members. In addition, ClearWater protects over 600 acres of land with five conservation easements and has completed impressive projects that advance its conservation mission such as a county-wide Natural Heritage Inventory, an International Countryside Stewardship Exchange, the Spring Creek Rivers Conservation Plan, and the Vision 2020: Living with I-99 Land Use & Sustainability Plan.

the group's agenda, to inform the public and gain support for conservation issues. Special events and demonstrations of conservation techniques enlighten the community and provide opportunities for volunteers to participate in the protection and improvement of our natural

resources. "Everyone working together to conserve natural beauty and the environment in the heart of Pennsylvania" is the vision that ClearWater has chosen to illustrate the importance of moving all community stakeholders towards a common conservation goal.



*Jim McClure's famous bathtub cartoon has been a ClearWater icon since its earliest days. The message is just as appropriate today as it was in 1981.*

Environmental outreach ranks high on

# Prelude

Growth and development trends in central Pennsylvania have been a cause for concern to those who wish to preserve the area's ecological character and environmental resources for many years. In 1978, a group of local citizens invested their lives in a land use issue that, according to many involved, provided the impetus for great change in the people's role in their community.

Oxford Development Company planned to construct the Ferguson Mall in Ferguson Township near residential areas and a school. Because the bedrock in the area is made of limestone, a material known for the formation of sinkholes, the residents felt that the resulting stormwater runoff would threaten the stability of the school. Other concerns with the construction were the effects on wells, the effects on local farming, and the developer's attempts to have a floodplain ordinance waived.

Those who opposed the development of the mall faced many obstacles due to the unprecedented nature of their actions in the local community. The group's inexperience meant that they were unfamiliar with the most effective courses of action, resulting in an inefficient use of time.

However, the concerned citizens did not give up. The group produced a petition with 10,000 signatures, became involved with all areas of government, and took on a campaign slogan of "Don't Mall Us." They also developed a movie titled "Please Listen, Mr. Supervisor."

Township supervisors went on to approve the development, but the developer withdrew his plans for unknown reasons. Changes were made in the way the land was to be used and a compromise on what was to be built was eventually reached.

The issue of the Ferguson Mall became a wake up call for the community. Barbara Fisher believes that this issue was a wakeup call for those who cared about the future of the community. She explains, "The amount of energy and sacrifice seemed so inefficient to make what we thought was right happen. We wanted to figure out a solution so that the next time around there could be a more positive way to express ourselves and our dreams."

Forming a land trust was a promising idea. Fisher summarizes the process of ClearWater's birth by saying, "It takes a spark to light a fire."



*Jim McClure's artistic depiction of the Ferguson Mall controversy, the issue that led to the formation of the ClearWater Conservancy.*



## ClearWater Conservancy

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brian McCullough, President  
Ed Dunkelberger, First Vice President  
Christopher Finton, Second Vice President  
Max Gill, Treasurer  
Carolyn Mahan, Secretary

	Patrick Morse	EX-OFFICIOS
Ellie Beaver	Heidi Nicholas	George Beatty
Dan Crust	Gene Proch	Bob Carline
Walter Ebaugh	James M. Rayback	Tony Gerace
Barbara Fisher	Tom Songer	Caren Glatfelly
Kelleann Foster	Ford Stryker	George Hildenbrandt
Howard Greenberg	Jeff Sturniolo	Jim McClure
Don Hamer	Shana Tritsch	Doug Wion
Neil Korostoff	Dennis Zwigart	John Ziegler
Robert McKinstry		

### LIFE MEMBERS

Joe Banks	Ray Noll Jr.
George Beatty	Roxanne & Andy Shiels
Ron Buckalew	Bob & Louella Shipman*
Walt & Michele Ebaugh	Tom Smyth
Robert & Jeannette Eberhart	Philip & Virginia Walker
John & Barbara Fisher	Donald & Diana Watson
Bob & Lee Gruver	Paul & Darlene Weener
Don Hamer	
Fred Nicholas	*deceased

### STAFF

Executive Director: Jennifer Shuey  
Administrative Assistant: Angela Mitchell  
Watershed Coordinator: Katie Ombalski  
Land Protection Coordinator: Lynn Fosbender  
Watershed Planner: Matt Genchur

**Special thanks to Adrienne Asbury for researching and writing and to Eric Shaffer for editing this History of the ClearWater Conservancy.**

The mission of ClearWater is to promote responsible stewardship of the natural and historical resources of central Pennsylvania by:

- Serving as a land trust
- Maintaining our high quality of life through the implementation of watershed-based planning and the support of watershed-based organizations
- Maintaining a leadership role in the Spring Creek Watershed
- Creating partnerships with government, private enterprise, educational entities, and community-based organizations
- Providing to all community members educational resources and opportunities that promote a positive conservation ethic
- Ensuring sufficient resources to carry out the conservation mission

### ClearWater Conservancy

2555 North Atherton Street, State College, PA 16803  
(814) 237-0400 [www.clearwaterconservancy.org](http://www.clearwaterconservancy.org)  
[contactus@clearwaterconservancy.org](mailto:contactus@clearwaterconservancy.org)

ClearWater Conservancy is a nonprofit organization, chartered in 1980, and supported by its membership. All contributions to ClearWater are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.  
Thank you for your support!

# Genesis and Formative Years

## ClearWater's Original Mission Statement

To conserve and protect irreplaceable resources – air, water, land, flora and fauna, natural beauty, and our historic heritage. The ClearWater Conservancy aims to do this through education, interaction with other organizations and agencies, information exchange, study and research; and through obtaining ownership or protective custody of threatened land, water resources and buildings, either by gift, purchase, or conservation easement.

On April 6, 1980, concerned citizens held the first exploratory meeting of what would soon become the ClearWater Conservancy. Several members visited the Brandywine Conservancy in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania to learn more about land trusts and the conservation role they played in southeastern Pennsylvania.

With the knowledge they gained, ClearWater's founders applied to the Commonwealth for incorporation as a land trust. ClearWater Conservancy's first official board was then elected at a public meeting on October 7, 1980. Jim McClure served as ClearWater's first president, and it was McClure who came up with the name "The ClearWater Conservancy". Under his presidency, ClearWater established its mission and began to set goals.

Although ClearWater quickly involved itself with several land use issues, the group knew that it needed to build its identity and integrity during these formative years by avoiding getting caught up in too many complicated concerns. In an attempt to strengthen the organization, ClearWater began to impose order upon itself. The board of directors was set up and officers were elected, and various committees with their

own meeting schedules were established.

Another important factor in establishing ClearWater's presence during this early period was the ability of the group to involve important community leaders and groups in its membership activities. Most notably, ClearWater formed a strong relationship with the Maurice K. Goddard Professorship in Forestry and Environmental Resource Conservation at the Pennsylvania State University. This position was endowed in 1983 to recognize and honor the distinguished career of Dr. Maurice K. Goddard.

Partnerships were a priority of ClearWater from its earliest years. ClearWater involved local elected officials during this period of critical growth. Furthermore, in its first year, ClearWater was able to build important relationships with Trout Unlimited, the Centre County League of Women Voters, and the local chapter of the Sierra Club.

## A Message from the President

When I first considered leading the ClearWater Conservancy, I thought of the long line of past ClearWater Presidents: Jim McClure, Barbara Fisher, Alice Beatty, Doug Wion, George Beatty, John Ziegler, George Hildenbrandt, Don Hamer, Bob Carline, Tony Gerace, Caren Glotfelty, and Walt Ebaugh... an impressive list indeed. As ClearWater evolved, its leadership offered special talents that shaped the organization - gifts of vision, enthusiasm, organizational expertise, business acumen, and passion. ClearWater is a testament to these leaders and the many other volunteers and members who have given so much back to the community through their dedication to our natural resources.

As we look back at our history, let us also look forward to the future. ClearWater has had significant accomplishments over the past twenty-three years, but we are poised to do so much more. Our new Riparian Conservation Program promises to blend each of our organizational strengths - land conservation, watershed stewardship, and environmental outreach - into an important, focused initiative. Our vision of a ribbon of green weaving throughout the Spring Creek Watershed will become a reality, with time, resources, and a persistent commitment to conservation. Please join us!



# Milestones and Evolution

Many milestones and areas of evolution mark ClearWater's development from the 38-member organization with a wide-ranging mission statement that existed at the end of the first year to the focused organization of more than 600 memberships that currently exists. On June 16, 1982, the ClearWater Conservancy was granted federal tax exemption. This status enabled ClearWater to begin pursuing conservation easements since the organization could now legally accept them as charitable contributions.

In 1988, despite its many strengths, ClearWater reached a threshold moment. At the time, the organization was trying to do too many things, threatening the collapse of the Conservancy. Concerned members began focusing their goals on three main areas: conserving Spring Creek, developing their financial resources, and hiring a part-time employee. Also, the organization needed to complete the transition from a group

that primarily protested actions they did not approve of to a proactive organization that worked positively to accomplish its goals. A committee was appointed in December of 1988 to find a part-time staff member. The



*ClearWater Conservancy's office in 2003, immediately following the urban wildlife habitat garden demonstration plantings.*

following spring, Julie Lalo was hired as ClearWater's first paid coordinator, dealing with membership and communication issues.

Kristen Saacke Blunk was hired in 1994 and led ClearWater into a new era of outreach focused on the Spring Creek Watershed. Roxanne Shiels

was the first Watershed Coordinator of the Spring Creek Watershed Community starting in 1997, and later directed the massive *Vision 2020: Living with I-99* project. Darlene Weener took over as Executive

Director in 1999, and ushered the organization through a tremendous period of growth and change.

ClearWater would move into its first office location during fall of 1997. This building is the former Patton Township building, located at 2555 North Atherton Street.

Through the years there have been many staff changes and added positions at ClearWater. Jennifer Shuey has been

the Executive Director since the end of 2000, and the current core staff of program managers now includes Katie Ombalski as Watershed Coordinator, Lynn Fosbender as Land Protection Coordinator, and Matt Genchur as Watershed Planner. Angela Mitchell is ClearWater's office manager.

## *Through the Years...*

**1980...** ClearWater Conservancy of Central Pennsylvania, Inc. founded... Franklin Landfill disputed **1982...** Federal tax exemption granted, enabling acceptance of conservation easements as charitable contributions **1983...** First Spring Creek Day... Relationship established between ClearWater and the Goddard Professorship at Penn State **1986...** Rhoneymeade Conservation Easement completed **1989...** Julie Lalo hired as ClearWater's first paid Coordinator

**1990...** Tradition of planting trees on Arbor Day in memory of Alice Beatty began... Nittany Farms Conservation Easement completed **1991...** Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory completed **1994...** Kristen Saacke Blunk hired as Coordinator... Spring Creek Corridor Study completed **1995...** Donald W. Hamer Land Conservation Fund established **1996...** International Countryside Stewardship Exchange... Birth of Spring Creek Watershed Community and Spring Creek Watershed Commission **1997...** Roxanne Shiels hired as first Watershed Coordinator... ClearWater begins "Connections" student field trip program on behalf of Spring Creek Watershed Community... First Watershed Cleanup Day... ClearWater moves into its first office at 2555 North Atherton Street **1998...** Darlene Weener hired as Executive Director... "The ClearWater Conservancy Fund" established at the Centre County Community Foundation **1999...** ClearWater's first "For the Love of Chocolate" benefit event

**2000...** Rare Millbrook Marsh Fen received as gift from the Niebel family... Jennifer Shuey hired as Executive Director... Thompson Woods Preserve Conservation Easement completed **2001...** Millbrook Marsh Conservation Easement completed... Vision 2020: Living with I-99 Land Use and Sustainability Plan completed... Spring Creek Watershed Community received Governor's Award for Watershed Stewardship for the Spring Creek Water Resources Monitoring Project... Spring Creek Rivers Conservation Plan completed, enabling Spring Creek's listing on the Pennsylvania Rivers Registry **2003...** ClearWater membership reached 600... ClearWater received Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence for Stream and Riparian Restoration at the PA Military Museum... Taylor Potter Conservation Easement completed... "The ClearWater Conservancy Conservation Easement Stewardship Fund" established at the Centre County Community Foundation

# Projects and Accomplishments

## Land Conservation

An integral part of ClearWater's mission has always been land conservation, for numerous reasons. Land uses such as greenways, streamside riparian buffers, and open space used for groundwater recharge are all directly related to healthy water resources. Additionally, land conservation is an important issue within the Spring Creek Watershed because it is key in protecting natural habitats, rare ecosystems, and public access to points of recreational and scenic interest.

The main way in which the ClearWater Conservancy can protect land for these various purposes is through conservation easement. In general, a conservation easement is a permanent agreement between a

landowner and the easement holder to preserve land for specific purposes. ClearWater Conservancy has five such easements.

Rhoneymeade, a historic farm once part of William Penn's Nottingham Manor, was ClearWater's first conservation easement in 1986. A conservation easement on Nittany Farms was acquired in 1990. This farm is considered to be the starting point for the main stem of Spring Creek.

A conservation easement on the Thompson Woods Preserve was established in 2000 because of its importance as a 60-80 year old mature forest near downtown State College and its ability to connect several parks and natural areas.

2001 saw the addition of the Millbrook Marsh conservation easement. The Marsh is the largest remaining calcareous fen in Pennsylvania and had been designated a high priority site because of its rare plant assemblage, its scenic open

space, its essential function of absorbing and filtering stormwater runoff, and its vulnerability due to its proximity to urban areas.



*Slab Cabin Run flowing through the Millbrook Marsh.*

Besides its five conservation easements, the ClearWater Conservancy also owns the rare, 5 1/2 acre Millbrook Marsh fen.

The Taylor Potter Farm is the latest conservation easement, signed officially in September 2003. This project involved a unique partnership with the Centre County Ag Land Preservation Program and EPA.

Past president Don Hamer was instrumental in the conservation of Millbrook Marsh and focused the group's attention on the protection of Spring Creek. In 1995, the Donald W. Hamer Land Conservation Fund was established to honor his important land protection efforts. This fund relies on donations and is intended to be used to cover the various costs



*Volunteers monitor the conservation easement and enjoy a hike through the Thompson Woods Preserve.*

(continued on page 7)

# Watershed Stewardship

The Spring Creek Rivers Conservation Plan is now at the heart of both ClearWater's land conservation and watershed stewardship programs. In protecting land through conservation easements, studies, and planning documents, ClearWater members act as stewards of the local watershed.

Perhaps the most salient example of ClearWater's watershed stewardship was its hosting of the International Countryside Stewardship Exchange in 1996. ClearWater vied with other communities within the Chesapeake Bay watershed for the opportunity to host a team of international experts who would define and address local watershed-based problems and issues. Eventually, 500 stakeholders would form a steering committee that would bring the Exchange to the watershed. The Exchange team consisted of four experts from Great Britain and two experts from the United States. Their report on the watershed addressed area issues such as urbanization, farmland preservation, education, and fragmentation of

local government. But more importantly, it motivated the local community to learn more about the watershed and take action to protect and enhance its natural and cultural resources.

Based on the insights of this report, the Spring Creek Watershed Action Agenda was developed to outline modest projects to increase public awareness of Spring Creek and its watershed, immediate actions to inform local officials and the general public about the exchange's outcomes, and longer-term activities to implement exchange recommendations. The committee formed for the Exchange evolved into what is now known as the Spring Creek Watershed Community.

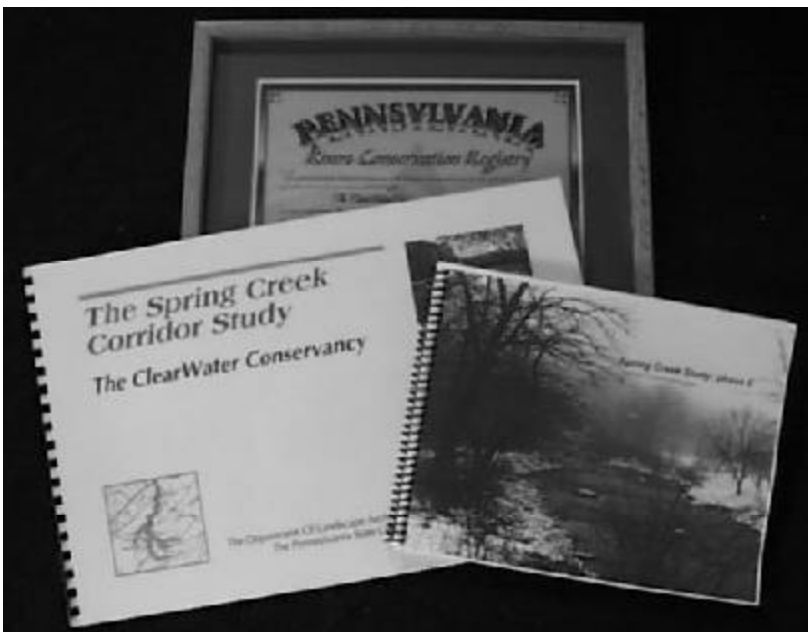
Since 1997, ClearWater has advanced many of the Watershed Community's projects, including the Water Resources Monitoring Project,



*Bryce Boyer samples water each month for the Governor's Award-winning Water Resources Monitoring Project of the Spring Creek Watershed Community. Data from this project can be found at [www.springcreekwatershed.org](http://www.springcreekwatershed.org).*

the "Students-Community-Streams-Connections" outdoor watershed education program, facilitation of the I-99 Partnership for Sustainable Development and creation of the *Vision 2020: Living with I-99 Land Use and Sustainability Plan*, erection of watershed boundary signs, publication of *Springs&Sinks*, and coordination of watershed cleanup days.

Since its inception, the Spring Creek Watershed Community's activities have also been leading to the creation of a comprehensive Watershed Plan. The Watershed Plan and its associated water and land use modelling effort will give community decision makers a powerful tool for managing the future of our water resources.



*The Spring Creek Rivers Conservation Plan enabled Spring Creek's listing on the Pennsylvania Rivers Registry.*



# Environmental Outreach

Environmental outreach is an integral part of ClearWater's mission. ClearWater often reaches out to its membership and the community to initiate interest and participation in land conservation and watershed stewardship goals, but the group also seeks to provide entertainment with an environmental theme, to promote environmental awareness, and to provide opportunities for camaraderie among concerned citizens.

ClearWater's early methods of environmental outreach consisted largely of inviting experts to speak at meetings, holding special programs, and sponsoring guided field trips.

Another classic example of ClearWater's environmental outreach efforts is its annual Spring Creek Day. The first annual Spring Creek Day was held on October 16, 1983 at Stonehouse Farm, the site of one of the headsprings of Spring Creek. Those attending the event participated

in field trips to important Spring Creek locations and a potluck picnic. These activities successfully promoted ClearWater's purposes, and members began to work toward developing the day as an important ClearWater tradition. Over the next 21 years, Spring Creek Day continued, taking place at Spring Creek Park in Houserville, Fisherman's Paradise, the PA Military Museum in Boalsburg, Buffalo Run Community Park, and the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center. Activities and exhibits for children and adults grew in number, dealing with topics such as trout, birds, plants, geology, magic, art, and music. Overall, the event is a family day of fun to help increase awareness about our resource-rich watershed.

In addition to Spring Creek Day, annual outreach events held by the ClearWater Conservancy include Mother's Day Wildflower Walks, Arbor Day, and the "For the Love of Art & Chocolate" Celebration.

**ClearWater Conservancy Membership**

If you who would like to become a ClearWater member, or if you need to renew your membership, please fill out the form below and mail to: ClearWater Conservancy, 2885 North Albion Street, State College, PA, 16803.

Individual/Family	Business/Organization
<input type="checkbox"/> Steward \$1,200	<input type="checkbox"/> Visionary \$5,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> Leader \$2,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Steward \$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Patron \$750
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributor \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$250
	<input type="checkbox"/> Friend \$100

Name/Company \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Payment:  Check (made payable to ClearWater Conservancy)  
 Money Order  Visa  
Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Name (as it appears on card) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

The tradition of Arbor Day tree plantings sponsored by ClearWater has been made possible by the Alice Beatty Memorial Plant Fund. The fund, which commemorates Beatty's many years of service to the conservancy, covers the cost of trees planted annually by local schoolchildren. Alice and her husband George, were also instrumental in the inception of the annual wildflower walks.

## Land Conservation ...continued

associated with acquiring and maintaining conservation easements.

In 1989, the ClearWater Conservancy and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy jointly proposed an inventory of Centre County's natural areas. The goal of such an inventory would be to systematically identify natural areas of specific importance and encourage their protection. This part of ClearWater's land conservation program is known as the Centre County Natural Heritage Inventory. In 2002, the Inventory was updated and made available electronically to

decision makers and the general public.

In 1991, in keeping with the National Heritage Inventory's philosophy of recommendation based on research, ClearWater began the Spring Creek Corridor Study. Objectives of the study at this time included providing ClearWater with extensive data regarding land use and ownership along Spring Creek, defining the kinds of property and easements ClearWater should obtain, and "creating an urban necklace of natural areas adorning

the city." The vision for conservation expressed in the Spring Creek Corridor Study, however, would soon be extended in critical ways.

In 1998, ClearWater had two primary goals for furthering the Spring Creek Corridor Study. Phase II would extend the study to include key tributaries of Spring Creek and convert existing data to a GIS format.

Late in 2001, the re-named Spring Creek Rivers Conservation Plan was completed and Spring Creek was listed on the Pennsylvania Rivers Registry, culminating this ten-year conservation planning process.

# A Look Towards the Future

Although ClearWater Conservancy began tenuously as a response to local growth and planning issues, the organization has evolved into a proactive body, implementing successful projects in order to work toward its current mission.

In the coming years, ClearWater Conservancy will focus increasing attention on projects that produce a measurable environmental benefit. ClearWater will build on the success of the stream restoration and stormwater management demonstration project at the Pennsylvania Military Museum in Boalsburg and the Conservation Techniques for Watershed-Wise Backyards and Businesses demonstration project at the ClearWater office to teach watershed citizens better land management options. Open space conservation will become a greater priority as the Land Conservation Program grows. And a new Riparian Conservation Program will combine the best features of each of the Land Conservation, Watershed Stewardship, and Environmental Outreach programs to educate streamside landowners, replant vegetative buffers, develop model riparian overlay zoning ordinances, and permanently protect the riparian ribbon of green with conservation easements.

Over the past 23 years, leaders, members, and staff of the organization have worked to establish the group's



*The stream and riparian buffer restoration and demonstration project at the Pennsylvania Military Museum won the 2003 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence.*

goals and procedures through a revisionary process—that is, the goals and procedures have been reevaluated and often reworked according to the needs of the organization, the local community, and the environment. Despite this constant flux, one aspect of ClearWater has remained fixed since its inception—people make ClearWater work. Past President Walter Ebaugh states, “ClearWater’s greatest strength is in the commitment of its members. As their number have grown, so has the organization’s capacity.”

ClearWater was formed by concerned citizens and developed by

members, volunteers, and staff, and its future rests in the hands of similarly committed individuals. Appropriately, ClearWater’s vision reads, “Everyone working together to conserve natural beauty and the environment in the heart of Pennsylvania.”

Executive Director, Jennifer Shuey, provides the closing message. “Every citizen has a stake in the quality of life of our communities. Please join us in our efforts to make a positive impact on our environment. Consider giving generously of your time, your talents, or your financial resources. The magnitude of our future success depends on you.”

**...Please Join Us!**

*For more information, please contact  
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